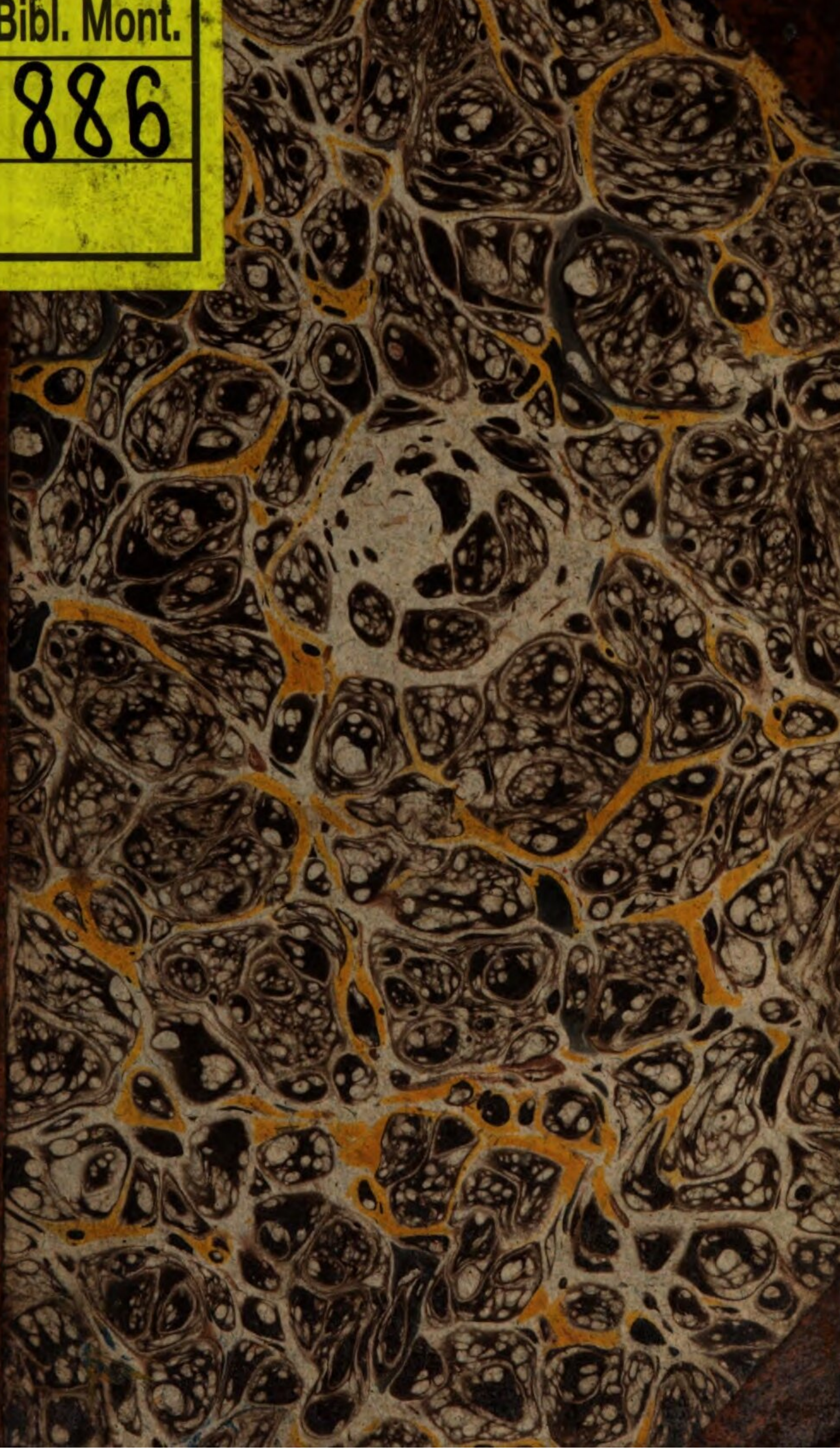


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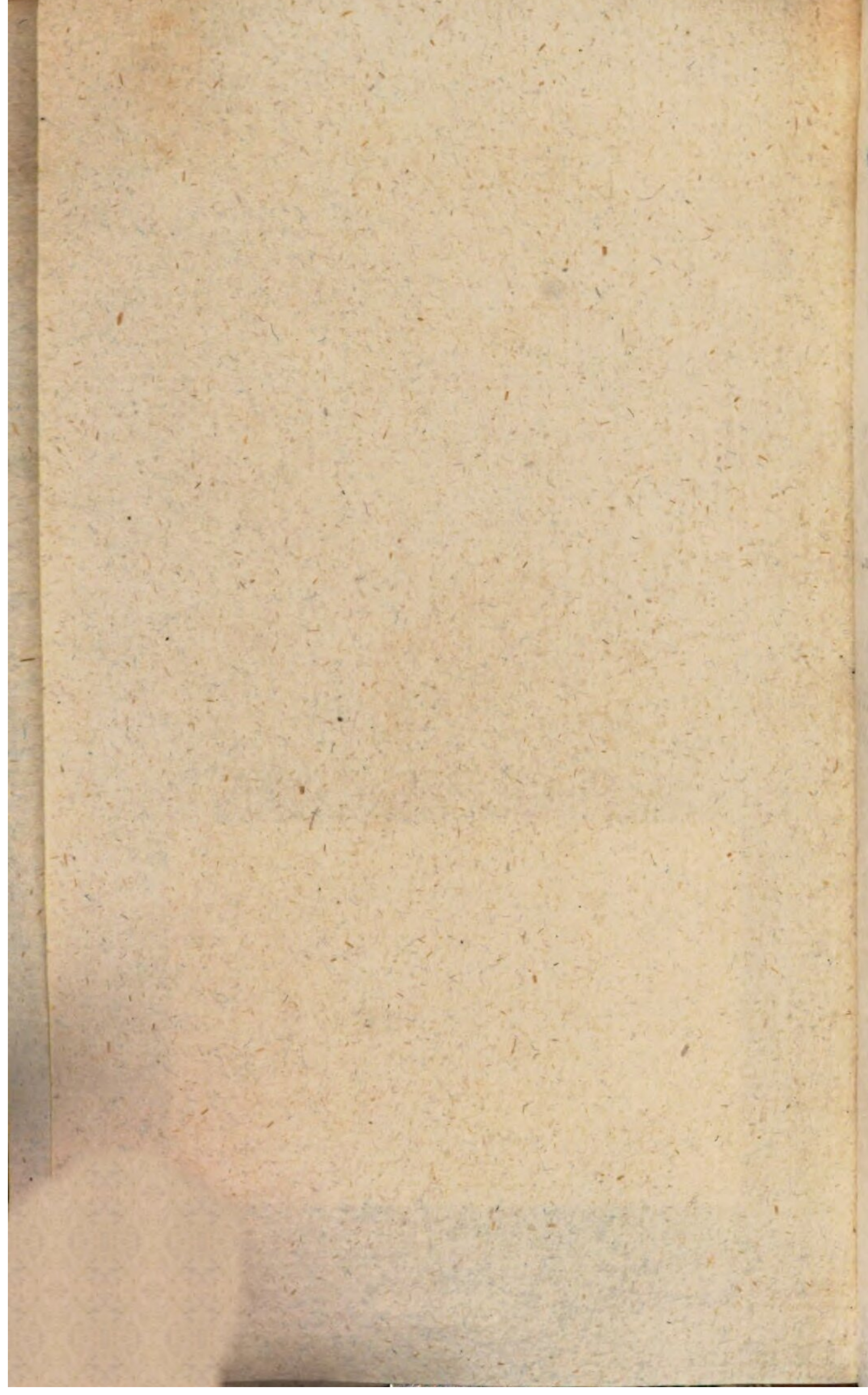


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THE
CONSCIOUS LOVERS,

A
COMEDY,

WRITTEN

BY SIR RICHARD STEELE.



PARIS.

Published

BY

PARSONS AND GALIGNANI.

1805.

THE
CONSCIOUS LOVERS,
DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN. { Sir JOHN BEVIL.
Mr. SEALAND.
BEVIL jun. in love with Indiana.
MYRTLE, in love with Lucinda.
CIMBERTON, a Coxcomb.
HUMPHREY, an old Servant to Sir John.
TOM, Servant to Bevil jun.
DANIEL, a Country Boy, Servant to Indiana.

WOMEN. { Mrs. SEALAND, second Wife to Sealand.
ISABELLA, Sister to Sealand.
INDIANA, Sealand's Daughter by his first Wife.
LUCINDA, Sealand's Daughter by his second Wife.
PHILLIS, Maid to Lucinda.

Scene, London.

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THE
CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

SCENE, *Sir John Bevil's House.*

Enter Sir John Bevil and Humphrey.

Sir JOHN BEVIL.

HAVE you order'd that I should not be interrupted while I am dressing?

Humph. Yes, Sir: I believ'd you had something of moment to say to me.

Sir J. Bev. I'll tell thee. In the first place, this wedding of my Son's, in all probability (shut the door), will never be at all.

Humph. How! Sir, not be at all! for what reason is it carried on in appearance?

Sir J. Bev. Honest Humphrey, have patience, and I'll tell thee all in order. I have myself, in some part of my life, liv'd (indeed) with freedom, but, I hope, without reproach. Now, I thought liberty wou'd be as little injurious to my Son; therefore, as soon as he grew towards man, I indulg'd him in living after his own manner: I knew not how, otherwise, to judge of his inclination; for

what can be concluded from a behaviour under restraint and fear? But what charms me above all expression is, that my Son has never, in the least action, the most distant hint or word, valued himself upon that great estate of his mother's, which, according to our marriage settlement, he has had ever since he came of age.

Humph. No, Sir; on the contrary, he seems afraid of appearing to enjoy it before you or any belonging to you—He is as dependant, and resign'd to your will, as if he had not a farthing but what must come from your immediate bounty—You have ever acted like a good and generous father, and he, like an obedient and grateful Son.

Sir J. Bev. Nay, his carriage is so easy to all with whom he converses, that he is never assuming, never prefers himself to others, nor ever is guilty of that rough sincerity which a man is not call'd to, and which certainly disoblige most of his acquaintance. To be short, Humphrey, his reputation was so fair in the world, that old Sealand, the great India merchant, has offer'd his only daughter, and sole heiress to that vast estate of his, as a wife for him. You may be sure I made no difficulties; the match was agreed on, and this very day named for the wedding.

Humph. What hinders the proceeding?

Sir J. Bev. Don't interrupt me. You know, I was last thursday at the masquerade; my Son, you may remember, soon found us out—He knew his grandfather's habit, which I then wore; and tho' it was the mode in the last age, yet the maskers, you

know, follow'd us as if we had been the most monstrous figures in that whole assembly.

Humph. I remember, indeed, a young man of quality in the habit of a clown that was particularly troublesome.

Sir J. Bev. Right—He was too much what he seem'd to be. You remember how impertinently he follow'd, and teiz'd us, and wou'd know who we were—He follow'd us till the gentleman, who led the Lady in the Indian mantle, presented that gay creature to the rustic, and bid him (like Cymon in the Fable) grow polite by falling in love, and let that worthy old gentleman alone, meaning me—The clown was not reform'd, but rudely persisted, and offer'd to force off my mask; with that, the gentleman, throwing off his own, appear'd to be my Son, and in his concern for me tore off that of the nobleman: at this, they seiz'd each other; the company call'd the Guards; and in the surprise, the Lady swoon'd away: upon which my Son quitted his adversary, and had now no care but of the Lady; when raising her in his arms, “art thou gone”, cried he—“for ever! forbid it Heaven!” She revives at his known voice—and with the most familiar, tho' modest gesture, hangs in safety over his shoulder, weeping; but wept, as in the arms of one, before whom she could give herself a loose were she not under observation: while she hides her face in his neck, he carefully conveys her from the company.

Humph. I have observ'd, this accident has dwelt upon you very strongly.

Sir J. Bev. Her uncommon air, her noble

modesty, the dignity of her person, and the occasion itself, drew the whole assembly together; and I soon heard it buzz'd about, she was the adopted daughter of a famous sea-officer, who had serv'd in France. Now this unexpected and public discovery of my Son's so deep concern for her—

Humph. Was what, I suppose, alarm'd Mr. Sealand in behalf of his daughter, to break off the match.

Sir J. Bev. You are right — He came to me yesterday and said, he thought himself disengag'd from the bargain, being credibly informed my Son was already married, or worse, to the Lady at the masquerade. I palliated matters, and insisted on our agreement; but we parted with little less than a direct breach between us.

Humph. Well, Sir, and what notice have you taken of all this to my young master?

Sir J. Bev. I have said nothing to him yet — But look you, Humphrey—if there is so much in this amour of his, that he denies upon my summons to marry, I have cause enough to be offended. And then, by my insisting upon his marrying to-day, I shall know how far he is engag'd to this Lady in masquerade; and from thence only shall be able to take my measures. In the mean time I would have you find out how far that rogue, his man, is let into his secret—He, I know, will play tricks, as much to cross me as to serve his master—I'll leave him to you. [Exit Sir John Bevil.

Humph. Well, tho' this father and Son live as well together as possible, yet their fear of giving each other pain is attended with constant mutual

uneasiness—Ho! ho! Tom, whither so gay and so airy this morning!

Enter Tom, singing.

Humph. I wanted to see you, to enquire how things go with your master, as far as you understand them; I suppose he knows he is to be married to-day.

Tom. Ay, Sir, he knows it, and is dress'd as gay as the Sun; but, between you and I, my dear, he has a very heavy heart under all that gaiety. As soon as he was dress'd I retir'd, but overheard him sigh in the most heavy manner. He walk'd thoughtfully to and fro' in the room, then went into his closet; when he came out, he gave me this for his mistress, whose maid you know—

Humph. Is passionately fond of your fine person.

Tom. The poor fool is so tender, and loves to hear me talk of the world, and the Plays, Operas, and *Ridottos*, for the winter; the park and Bellsizes, for our summer diversions; and lard! says she, you are so wild—but you have a world of humour—

Humph. Coxcomb! well, but why don't you run with your master's letter to Mrs. Lucinda, as he order'd you?

Tom. Because Mrs. Lucinda is not so easily come at as you think for.

Humph. Not easily come at? Why, sirrah, are not her father and my old master agreed, that she and Mr. Bevil are to be united before to-morrow morning?

Tom. It's no matter for that; her mother, it

seems, Mrs. Sealand, has not agreed to it: and you must know, Mr. Humphrey, that in that family the grey mare is the better horse.

Humph. What dost thou mean?

Tom. In one word, Mrs. Sealand pretends to have a will of her own, and has provided a relation of hers, a stiff, starch'd philosopher, and a wise fool for her daughter; for which reason, for these ten days past, she has suffer'd no message nor letter from my master to come near her.

Humph. And where had you this intelligence?

Tom. From a foolish fond Soul that can keep nothing from me—One that will deliver this letter too, if she is rightly managed.

Humph. What, her pretty hand-maid, Mrs. Phillis?

Tom. Even she, Sir: this is the very hour, you know, she usually comes hither, under a pretence of a visit to your housekeeper forsooth, but in reality to have a glance at—

Humph. Your sweet face, I warrant you.

Tom. Nothing else in nature.

Humph. Then I hope, dear Sir, when your own affair is over, you will be so good as to mind your master's with her.

Tom. Dear Humphrey, you know my master is my friend, and those are people I never forget.—

Humph. Sauciness itself! but I'll leave you to do your best for him. [Exit.

Enter Phillis.

Tom. Mrs. Phillis, I am your humble servant.

Phil. Yes, Mr. Thomas, I know how much you

are my humble servant, and know what you said to Mrs. Judy upon seeing her in one of her Lady's cast manteaus. O Tom! Tom! thou art as false and as base as the best gentleman of them all: but, you wretch! talk to me no more on the old odious subject; don't, I say.

Tom. I know not how to resist your commands, Madam. [*In a submissive tone, retiring.*]

Phil. Commands about parting are grown mighty easy to you of late.

Tom. Why, truly, to be plain with you, Mrs. Phillis, I can take little comfort of late in frequenting your house.

Phil. Pray, Mr. Thomas, what is it, all of a sudden, offends your nicety at our house?

Tom. I don't care to speak particulars, but I dislike the whole.

Phil. I thank you, Sir; I am a part of that whole.

Tom. Mistake me not, good Phillis.

Phil. Good Phillis! Saucy enough. But however—

Tom. I say, it is that thou art a part, which gives me pain for the disposition of the whole. You must know, Madam, to be serious, I am a man, at the bottom, of prodigious nice honour. You are too much expos'd to company at your house. To be plain, I don't like so many, that wou'd be your Mistress's Lovers, whispering to you.

Phil. Don't think to put that upon me. You say this, because I wrung you to the heart, when I touch'd your guilty conscience about Judy.

Tom. Ah! Phillis, Phillis, if you but knew my heart!

Phil. I know too much on't.

Tom. Nay then, poor Crispo's fate and mine are one—Therefore give me leave to say, or sing at least, as he does upon the same occasion.

[*Se vedete, &c. sings.*]

Phil. What! do you think I'm to be fobb'd off with a song! I don't question but you have sung the same to Mrs. Judy too.

Tom. Don't disparage your charms, good Phillis, with jealousy of so worthless an object; besides, she is a poor Hussey, and if you doubt the sincerity of my love, you will allow me true to my interest. You are a fortune, Phillis—

Phil. What wou'd the fop be at now! In good time indeed you shall be setting up for a fortune!

Tom. Dear Mrs. Phillis, you have such a spirit that we shall never be dull in marriage, when we come together. But I tell you, you are a fortune, and you have an estate in my hands.

[*He pulls out a purse; she eyes it.*]

Phil. What pretence have I to what is in your hands, Mr. Tom?

Tom. As thus: there are hours, you know, when a Lady is neither pleas'd nor displeas'd, neither sick nor well, when she lolls or loiters, when she's without desires from having more of every thing than she knows what to do with.

Phil. Well, what then?

Tom. When she has not life enough to keep her bright eyes quite open to look at her own dear image in the glass—

Phil. Explain thyself, and don't be so fond of thy own prating.

Tom. There are also prosperous and good-natur'd moments, as when a knot or a patch is happily fix'd; when the complexion particularly flourishes.

Phil. Well, what then? I have not patience!

Tom. Why, then—or on the like occasion—we servants, who have skill to know how to time business, see when such a pretty folded thing as this (*shews a letter*) may be presented, laid, or dropp'd, as best suits the present humour, and, Madam, because it is a long wearisome journey to run through all the several stages of a Lady's temper, my master, who is the most reasonable man in the world, presents you this to bear your charges on the road. [*Gives her the purse.*]

Phil. Now you think me a corrupt Hussey.

Tom. Oh fie! I only think you'll take the letter.

Phil. Nay, I know you do, but I know my own innocence; I take it for my Mistress's sake.

Tom. I know it, my pretty one, I know it.

Phil. Yes, I say I do it, because I wou'd not have my Mistress deluded by one who gives no proof of his passion; but I'll talk more of this as you see me on my way home—No, Tom, I assure thee, I take this trash of thy master's, not for the value of the thing, but as it convinces me he has a true respect for my Mistress. I remember a verse to the purpose:

They may be false who languish and complain,
But they who part with money never feign.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Bevil junior's Lodgings.

Bevil junior, *Reading*.

Bev. jun. These moral writers practise virtue after death : this charming vision of Mirza ! Such an author, consulted in a morning, sets the spirits for the vicissitudes of the day better than the glass does a man's person : but what a day have I to go thro' ! to put on an easy look with an aking heart !— If this Lady my father urges me to marry should not refuse me, my dilemma is insupportable. But why should I fear it ! is not she in equal distress with me ! has not the letter, I have sent her this morning, confess'd my inclination to another ! Nay, have I not moral assurances of her engagement too to my friend Myrtle ! 'Tis impossible but she must give into it : for, sure, to be denied is a favour any man may pretend to. It must be so—Well then, with the assurance of being rejected, I think I may confidently say to my father I am ready to marry her—Then let me resolve upon an honest dissimulation.

Enter Tom.

Tom. Sir John Bevil, Sir, is in the next room.

Bev. jun. Dunce ! Why did not you bring him in !

Tom. I told him, Sir, you were in your closet.

Bev. jun. I thought you had known, Sir, it was my duty to see my father any where.

[*Going himself to the door.*

Tom. The Devil's in my master! he has always more wit than I have. [*Aside.*

Bevil jun. introducing Sir John.

Bev. jun. Why wou'd you not walk in, Sir?

Sir J. Bev. I was loth to interrupt you unseasonably on your wedding day.

Bev. jun. One to whom I am beholden for my birth day might have used less ceremony.

Sir J. Bev. Well, Son, I have intelligence you have written to your Mistress this morning: it would please my curiosity to know the contents of a wedding day letter, for courtship must then be over.

Bev. jun. I assure you, Sir, there was no insolence in it upon the prospect of such a vast fortune's being added to our family, but much acknowledgement of the Lady's great desert.

Sir. J. Bev. But, dear Jack, are you in earnest in all this? And will you really marry her?

Bev. jun. Did I ever disobey any command of yours, Sir? nay, any inclination that I saw you bent upon?

Sir. J. Bev. Why, I can't say you have, Son; but, methinks, in this whole business, you have not been so warm as I could have wish'd you: you have visited her, 'tis true, but you have not been particular. Every one knows you can say and do as handsome things as any man; but you have done nothing, but liv'd in the general; been complaisant only.

Bev. jun. As I am ever prepar'd to marry if you

bid me, so I am ready to let it alone if you will have me. [Humphrey enters unobserv'd.

Sir J. Bev. Look you there now! why, what am I to think of this so absolute and so indifferent a resignation?

Bev. jun. Think! that I am still your Son, Sir—Sir, you have been married, and I have not. And you have, Sir, found the inconvenience there is, when a man weds with too much love in his head. I have been told, Sir, that at the time you married you made a mighty bustle on the occasion. There was challenging and fighting, scaling walls—locking up the Lady—and the gallant under an arrest for fear of killing all his rivals—Now, Sir, I suppose you having found the ill consequences of these strong passions and prejudices, in preference of one woman to another, in case of a man's becoming a widower—

Sir J. Bev. How is this!

Bev. jun. I say, Sir, experience has made you wiser in your care of me—for, Sir, since you lost my dear mother, your time has been so heavy, so lonely, and so tasteless, that you are so good as to guard me against the like unhappiness, by marrying me prudentially by way of bargain and sale. For, as you well judge, a woman that is espous'd for a fortune, is yet a better bargain, if she dies; for then a man still enjoys what he did marry, the Money, and is disencumber'd of what he did not marry, the Woman.

Sir J. Bev. But pray, Sir, do you think Lucinda then a woman of such little merit?

Bev. jun. Pardon me, Sir, I don't carry it so far neither; I am rather afraid I shall like her too well; she has, for one of her fortune, a great many needless and superfluous good qualities.

Sir J. Bev. I am afraid, Son, there's something I don't see yet, something that's smother'd under all this raillery.

Bev. jun. Not in the least, Sir: if the Lady is dress'd and ready, you see, I am. I suppose the lawyers are ready too.

Humph. This may grow warm, if I don't interpose. (*aside*) Sir, Mr. Sealand is at the coffee house, and has sent to speak with you.

Sir J. Bev. Oh! that's well! then I warrant the lawyers are ready. Son, you'll be in the way, you say—

Bev. jun. If you please, Sir, I'll take a chair, and go to Mr. Sealand's, where the young Lady and I will wait your leisure.

Sir J. Bev. By no means—The old fellow will be so vain, if he sees—

Bev. jun. Ay—but the young Lady, Sir, will think me so indifferent—

Humph. Ay—there you are right—press your readiness to go to the bride—he won't let you.

[*Aside to Bev. jun.*

Bev. jun. Are you sure of that? [*Aside to Humph.*

Humph. How he likes being prevented! [*Aside.*

Sir J. Bev. No, no: you are an hour or two too early. [*Looking on his watch.*

Bev. jun. You'll allow me, Sir, to think it too late to visit a beautiful, virtuous young woman, in

the pride and bloom of life, ready to give herself to my arms : and to place her happiness or misery, for the future, in being agreeable or displeasing to me, is a—call a chair.

Sir J. Bev. No, no, no, dear Jack ; this Sealand is a moody old fellow : there's no dealing with some people, but by managing with indifference. We must leave to him the conduct of this day : it is the last of his commanding his daughter.

Bev. jun. Sir, he can't take it ill, that I am impatient to be hers.

Sir J. Bev. Pray let me govern in this matter : you can't tell how humorsome old fellows are—There's no offering reason to some of 'em, especially when they are rich—if my Son should see him, before I've brought old Sealand into better temper, the match would be impracticable. [*Aside.*

Humph. Pray, Sir, let me beg you to let Mr. Bevil go. See whether he will or not. [*aside to Sir John*]*—[then to Bev.]* Pray, Sir, command yourself; since you see my master is positive, it is better you should not go.

Bev. jun. My father commands me, as to the object of my affections ; but I hope he will not, as to the warmth and height of them.

Sir J. Bev. So ! I must even leave things as I found them : and in the mean time, at least, keep old Sealand out of his sight—well, Son, I'll go myself and take orders in your affair. You'll be in the way, I suppose, if I send to you—I'll leave your old friend with you—Humphrey—don't let him stir, d'ye hear : your servant, your servant. [*Ex. Sir John.*

Humph. I have a sad time on't, Sir, between you and my master—I see you are unwilling, and I know his violent inclination for the match—I must betray neither, and yet deceive you both, for your common good—Heav'n grant a good end of this matter! but there is a Lady, Sir, that gives your father much trouble and sorrow—You'll pardon me.

Bev. jun. Humphrey, I know thou art a friend to both; and in that confidence, I dare tell thee—That Lady—is a woman of honour and virtue. You may assure yourself, I never will marry without my father's consent: but give me leave to say too, this declaration does not come up to a promise that I will take whomsoever he pleases.

Humph. Come, Sir, I wholly understand you: you would engage my services to free you from this woman whom my Master intends you, to make way, in time, for the woman you have really a mind to. Were I but worthy to know this secret that so nearly concerns you, my life, my all, should be engag'd to serve you. This, Sir, I dare promise, that I am sure I will and can be secret: your trust, at worst, but leaves you where you were; and if I cannot serve you, I will at once be plain, and tell you so.

Bev. jun. That's all I ask—You may remember, Humphrey, that in my last travels, my father grew uneasy at my making so long a stay at Toulon.

Humph. I remember it; he was apprehensive some woman had laid hold of you.

Bev. jun. His fears were just; for there I first saw this Lady: she is of English birth: her father's

name was Danvers, a younger brother of an ancient family, and originally an eminent merchant of Bristol, who, upon repeated misfortunes, was reduced to go privately to the Indies. In this retreat Providence again grew favourable to his industry, and, in six years time, restored him to his former fortune. On this he sent directions over, that his wife and little family should follow him to the Indies. His wife, impatient to obey such welcome orders, would not wait the leisure of a convoy, but took the first occasion of a single ship, and with her husband's sister only, and this daughter, then scarce seven years old, undertook the fatal voyage; for here, poor creature, she lost her liberty, and life — She, and her family, with all they had, were unfortunately taken by a privateer from Toulon. Being thus made a prisoner, though, as such, not ill treated, yet the fright, the shock, and cruel disappointment, seiz'd with such violence upon her unhealthy frame, she sicken'd, pined and died at sea.

Humph. Poor soul! Oh! the helpless infant!

Bev. Her Sister yet surviv'd, and had the care of the child: the captain too proved to have humanity, and became a father to her; for having himself married an English woman, and being childless, he brought home into Toulon this her little countrywoman, presenting her, with all her dead mother's moveables of value, to his wife, to be educated as his own adopted daughter.

Humph. Fortune here seem'd, again, to smile on her.

Bev. Only to make her frowns more terrible:

for, in his height of fortune, this captain too, her benefactor, unfortunately was kill'd at sea, and dying intestate, his estate fell wholly to an advocate, his brother, who coming soon to take possession, there found (among his other riches) this blooming virgin, at his mercy.

Humph. He durst not, sure, abuse his power!

Bev. No wonder if his pamper'd blood was fired at the sight of her—in short, he lov'd: but, when all arts and gentle means had fail'd to move, he offer'd too his menaces in vain, denouncing vengeance on her cruelty: demanding her to account for all her maintenance from her childhood, seiz'd on her little fortune, as his own inheritance, and was dragging her by violence to prison, when Providence at the instant interpos'd, and sent me, by miracle, to relieve her.

Humph. 'Twas Providence indeed! but pray, Sir, after all this trouble, how came this Lady at last to England?

Bev. The disappointed advocate, finding she had so unexpected a support, on cooler thoughts, descended to a composition, which I, without her knowledge, secretly discharg'd.

Humph. That generous concealment made the obligation double.

Bev. Having thus obtain'd her liberty, I prevail'd, not without some difficulty, to see her safe to England, where I no sooner arrived, but my father, jealous of my being imprudently engaged, immediately proposed this other fatal match that hangs upon my quiet.

Humph. I find, Sir, you are irrecoverably fix'd upon this Lady.

Bev. As my vital life dwells in my heart—and yet you see what I do to please my father—walk in this pageantry of dress, this splendid covering of sorrow—But, Humphrey, you have your lesson.

Humph. Now, Sir, I have but one material question—

Bev. Ask it freely.

Humph. Is it then your own passion for this secret Lady, or hers for you, that gives you this aversion to the match your father has proposed to you?

Bev. I shall appear, Humphrey, more romantic in my answer than in all the rest of my story. For tho' I doat on her to death, and have no little reason to believe she has the same thoughts for me, yet in all my acquaintance, and utmost privacies with her, I never once directly told her that I loved.

Humph. How was it possible to avoid it?

Bev. My tender obligations to my father have laid so inviolable a restraint upon my conduct, that 'till I have his consent to speak, I am determin'd, on that subject, to be dumb for ever.

Humph. Well, Sir, to your praise be it spoken, you are certainly the most unfashionable Lover in Great-Britain.

Enter Tom.

Tom. Sir, Mr. Myrtle is at the next door, and, if you are at leisure, will be glad to wait on you.

Bev. Whenever he pleases—hold, Tom; did you receive no answer to my letter?

Tom. Sir, I was desir'd to call again; for I was told, her mother would not let her be out of her sight; but about an hour hence, Mrs. Lettice said, I should certainly have one.

Bev. Very well.

Humph. Sir, I will take another opportunity: in the mean time, I only think it proper to tell you that, from a secret I know, you may appear to your father as forward as you please to marry Lucinda, without the least hazard of its coming to a conclusion—Sir, your most obedient servant.

Bev. Honest Humphrey, continue but my friend in this exigence, and you shall always find me yours. [Exit Humph.

I long to hear how my letter has succeeded with Lucinda—but I think, it cannot fail; for, at worst, were it possible she could take it ill, her resentment of my indifference may as probably occasion a delay, as her taking it right—Poor Myrtle! what terrors must he be in all this while!—Since he knows she is offer'd to me, and refused to him, there is no conversing, or taking any measures with him for his own service—But I ought to bear with my friend, and use him as one in adversity:

All his disquiets by my own I prove;

The greatest grief's perplexity in Love. [Exeunt

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

A C T I I.

SCENE I.

*SCENE continues.**Enter Bevil jun. and Tom.*

T O M.

S I R, Mr. Myrtle.

Bev. jun. Very well—do you step again, and wait for an answer to my letter.*Enter Myrtle.**Bev. jun.* Well, Charles, why so much care in thy countenance? Is there any thing in this world deserves it? You, who used to be so gay, so open, so vacant!*Myrt.* I think we have of late chang'd complexions. You, who us'd to be much the graver man, are now all air in your behaviour—But the cause of my concern, may, for ought I know, be the same object that gives you all this satisfaction. In a word, I am told that you are this very day (and your dress confirms me in it) to be married to Lucinda.*Bev. jun.* You are not misinform'd—Nay, put not on the terrors of a rival till you hear me out. I shall disoblige the best of fathers, if I don't seem ready to marry Lucinda : and you know I have ever told you, you might make use of my secret resolution never to marry her for your own service,

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as you please. But I am now driven to the extremity of immediately refusing or complying, unless you help me to escape the match.

Myrt. Escape! Sir, neither her merit nor her fortune are below your acceptance—Escaping, do you call it!

Bev. jun. Dear Sir, do you wish I should desire the match?

Myrt. No—but such is my humorsome and sickly state of mind, since it has been able to relish nothing but Lucinda, that tho' I must owe my happiness to your aversion to this marriage, I can't bear to hear her spoken of with levity or unconcern.

Bev. jun. Pardon me, Sir; I shall transgress that way no more. She has understanding, beauty, shape, complexion, wit—

Myrt. Nay, dear Bevil, don't speak of her as if you lov'd her neither.

Bev. jun. Why then, to give you ease at once, tho' I allow Lucinda to have good sense, wit, beauty and virtue, I know another in whom these qualities appear to me more amiable than in her.

Myrt. There you spoke like a reasonable and good-natur'd friend. When you acknowledge her merit, and own your prepossession for another, at once you gratify my fondness, and cure my jealousy.

Bev. jun. But all this while you take no notice, you have no apprehension, of another man, that has twice the fortune of either of us.

Myrt. Cimberton! Hang him, a formal, philosophical, pedantic coxcomb!—For the sot, with all

these crude notions of divers things, under the direction of great vanity, and very little judgement, shews his strongest biass is avarice, which is so predominant in him that he will examine the limbs of his Mistress with the caution of a jockey, and pays no more compliment to her personal charms than if she were a meer breeding animal.

Bev. jun. Are you sure that is not affected! I have known some women sooner set on fire by that sort of negligence than by—

Myrt. No, no, hang him! the rogue has no art; it is pure simple insolence and stupidity.

Bev. jun. Yet, with all this, I don't take him for a fool.

Myrt. I own the man is not a natural; he has a very quick sense, tho' very slow understanding—He says indeed many things, that want only the circumstances of time and place to be very just and agreeable.

Bev. jun. Well, you may be sure of me if you can disappoint him; but my intelligence says, the mother has actually sent for the conveyancer to draw articles for his marriage with Lucinda; tho' those for mine with her, are, by her father's order, ready for signing; but it seems she has not thought fit to consult either him or his daughter in the matter.

Myrt. Pshaw! A poor troublesome woman—neither Lucinda nor her father will ever be brought to comply with it—besides, I am sure, Cimberton can make no settlement upon her without the concurrence of his great-uncle Sir Geoffry in the west.

Bev. jun. Well, Sir, and I can tell you, that's

the very point that is now laid before her counsel; to know, whether a firm settlement can be made without this uncle's actual joining in it—Now, pray, consider, Sir; when my affair with Lucinda comes, as it soon must, to an open rupture, how are you sure that Cimberton's fortune may not then tempt her father too to hear his proposals?

Myrt. There you are right indeed; that must be provided against.

Bev. jun. I'll warrant you success—so far we are right then—and now, Charles, your apprehension of my marrying her is all you have to get over.

Myrt. Dear Bevil, tho' I know you are my friend, yet when I abstract myself from my own interest in the thing, I know no objection she can make to you, or you to her, and therefore hope—

Bev. jun. Dear Myrtle, I am as much obliged to you for the cause of your suspicion as I am offended at the effect; but, be assured, I am taking measures for your certain security, and that all things with regard to me will end in your entire satisfaction.

Myrt. Well, I'll promise you to be as easy and as confident as I can, tho' I cannot but remember that I have more than life at stake on your fidelity. (*going*)

Bev. jun. Then depend upon it, you have no chance against you.

Myrt. Nay, no ceremony, you know I must be going. [*Exit Myrt.*]

Bev. Well! this is another instance of the perplexities which arise too in faithful friendship: we

must often, in this life, go on in our good offices, even under the displeasure of those to whom we do them, in compassion to their weaknesses and mistakes—But all this while poor Indiana is tortured with the doubt of me. She has no support or comfort, but in my fidelity, yet sees me daily press'd to marriage with another. How painful, in such a crisis, must be every hour she thinks on me! I'll let her see, at least, my conduct to her is not chang'd: I'll take this opportunity to visit her; for tho' the religious vow I have made to my father, restrains me from ever marrying without his approbation, yet that confines me not from seeing a virtuous woman, that is the pure delight of my eyes, and the guiltless joy of my heart: but the best condition of human life is but a gentler misery:

To hope for perfect happiness is vain;

And Love has ever its allays of pain. [*Exit.*

Enter Isabella, and Indiana in her own Lodgings.

Isab. Yes—I say 'tis artifice, dear child; I say to thee again and again, 'tis all skill and management.

Ind. Will you persuade me there can be an ill design in supporting me in the condition of a woman of quality? attended, dress'd, and lodg'd like one; in my appearance abroad, and my furniture at home, every way in the most sumptuous manner, and he that does it has an artifice, a design in it?

Isab. Yes, yes.

Ind. And all this without so much as explaining to me that all about me comes from him?

Isab. Ay, ay—the more for that—that keeps the Title to all you have the more in him.

Ind. The more in him!—He scorns the thought—

Isab. Then—he—he—he—

Ind. Well, be not so eager—If he is an ill man, let us look into his stratagems. Here is another of them. (*shewing a letter*) Here are two hundred and fifty pounds in bank notes, with these words, “to pay for the set of dressing-plate, which will be brought home to-morrow.” Why, dear Aunt, now here’s another piece of skill for you, which I own I cannot comprehend—and it is with a bleeding heart I hear you say any thing to the disadvantage of Mr. Bevil. When he is present, I look upon him as one to whom I owe my life, and the support of it; then again, as the man who loves me with sincerity and honour. When his eyes are cast another way, and I dare survey him, my heart is painfully divided between shame and love—Oh! cou’d I tell you!—

Isab. Ah! you need not : I imagine all this for you.

Ind. This is my state of mind in his presence; and when he is absent, you are ever dinning my ears with notions of the arts of men; that his hidden bounty, his respectful conduct, his careful provision for me, after his preserving me from utmost misery, are certain signs, he means nothing but to make I know not what of me.

Isab. Oh! you have a sweet opinion of him, truly.

Ind. I have, when I am with him, ten thousand

things, beside my sex's natural decency and shame, to suppress my heart, that yearns to thank, to praise, to say it loves him. I say, thus it is with me while I see him; and in his absence I am entertain'd with nothing but your endeavours to tear this amiable image from my heart; and, in its stead, to place a base dissembler, an artful invader of my happiness, my innocence, my honour.

Isab. Ah poor soul! has not his plot taken! don't you die for him! has not the way he has taken been the most proper with you! Oh! oh! he has sense, and has judg'd the thing right.

Ind. Go on then, since nothing can answer you: say what you will of him. Heigh! ho!

Isab. Heigh! ho! indeed. It is better to say so, as you are now, than as many others are. I will own to you, Mr. Bevil carries his hypocrisy the best of any man living; but still he is a man, and therefore a hypocrite. They have usurp'd an exemption from shame for any baseness, any cruelty towards us. They embrace without love; they make vows, without conscience of obligation; they are partners, nay, seducers to the crime wherein they pretend to be less guilty.

Ind. That's truly observ'd. [*Aside.* But what's all this to Bevil?

Isab. This it is to Bevil and all mankind. Trust not those who will think the worse of you for your confidence in them.

Ind. I will not doubt the truth of Bevil, I will not doubt it; he has not spoken it by an organ that is given to lying: his eyes are all that have ever

told me that he was mine : I know his virtue, I know his filial piety, and ought to trust his management with a father to whom he has uncommon obligations. What have I to be concern'd for? my lesson is very short. If he takes me for ever, my purpose of life is only to please him. If he leaves me (which Heaven avert!) I know he'll do it nobly; and I shall have nothing to do but to learn to die, after worse than death has happen'd to me.

Isab. Ay, do persist in your credulity. Flatter yourself that a man of his figure and fortune will make himself the jest of the town, and marry a handsome beggar for Love.

Ind. The town! I must tell you, Madam, the fools that laugh at Mr. Bevil will but make themselves more ridiculous; his actions are the result of thinking, and he has sense enough to make even virtue fashionable.

Isab. O' my conscience he has turn'd her head—Come, come; if he were the honest fool you take him for, why has he kept you here these three weeks without sending you to Bristol in search of your father, your family, and your relations?

Ind. I am convinc'd he still designs it; and that nothing keeps him here, but the necessity of not coming to a breach with his father in regard to the match he has propos'd him : besides, has he not written to Bristol? and has not he advice that my father has not been heard of there almost these twenty years?

Isab. He is afraid, if he should carry you thither, your honest relations may take you out of his

hands, and so blow up all his wicked hopes at once.

Ind. Wicked hopes! did I ever give him any such?

Isab. Has he ever given you any honest ones? can you say, in your conscience, he has ever once offer'd to marry you?

Ind. No; but by his behaviour I am convinc'd he will offer it the moment 'tis in his power, or consistent with his honour, to make such a promise good to me.

Isab. His honour!

Ind. I will rely upon it; therefore desire you will not make my life uneasy by these ungrateful jealousies of one, to whom I am, and wish to be, oblig'd: for, from his integrity alone, I have resolv'd to hope for happiness.

Isab. Nay, I have done my duty; if you won't see, at your peril be it.

Ind. Let it be—This is his hour of visiting me. All the rest of my life is but waiting till he comes: I live only when I'm with him. [Exit.

Isab. Well, go thy ways, thou wilful innocent. [Exit.

Re-enter Indiana speaking to a Servant.

Ind. Desire Mr. Bevil to walk in—Design! impossible! A base designing mind could never think of what he hourly puts in practice—And yet, since the late rumour of his marriage, he seems more reserv'd than formerly—he sends in too before he sees me to know if I am at leisure—such new respect may cover coldness in the heart—it certainly makes me thoughtful. I'll know the worst

at once; I'll lay such fair occasions in his way, that it shall be impossible to avoid an explanation, for these doubts are insupportable — But see! he comes and clears them all.

Enter Bevil.

Bev. Madam, your most obedient—I am afraid I broke in upon your rest last night—'twas very late before we parted; but 'twas your own fault. I never saw you in such agreeable humour.

Ind. I am extremely glad we were both pleas'd; for I thought I never saw you better company.

Bev. Me, Madam! you rally, I said very little.

Ind. But, I am afraid, you heard me say a great deal; and when a woman is in the talking vein, the most agreeable thing a man can do, you know, is to have patience to hear her.

Bev. Then 'tis pity, Madam, you should ever be silent, that we might be always agreeable to one another.

Ind. If I had your talent, or power, to make my actions speak for me, I might indeed be silent, and yet pretend to something more than the agreeable.

Bev. If I might be vain of any thing in my power, Madam, 'tis that my understanding, from all your sex, has mark'd you out as the most deserving object of my esteem.

Ind. Should I think I deserve this, 'twere enough to make my vanity forfeit the very esteem you offer me.

Bev. How so, Madam?

Ind. Because esteem is the result of reason, and

to deserve it from good sense, the height of human glory : nay, I had rather a man of honour should pay me that than all the homage of a sincere and humble Love.

Bev. jun. You certainly distinguish right, Madam; Love often kindles from external merit only—

Ind. But esteem arises from a higher source, the merit of the Soul—

Bev. jun. True — And great Souls only can deserve it. [*Bowing respectfully.*]

Ind. Now, I think, they are greater still, that can so charitably part with it.

Bev. jun. Now, Madam, you make me vain, since the utmost pride, and pleasure of my life is, that I esteem you—as I ought.

Ind. (aside) As he ought! still more perplexing! he neither saves, nor kills my hope.

Bev. jun. But, Madam, we grow grave, methinks—Let's find some other subject—Pray, how did you like the Opera last night?

Ind. First give me leave to thank you for my tickets.

Bev. jun. Oh! your servant, Madam.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir, here's Signor Corbonelli says he waits your commands in the next room.

Bev. jun. A propos : you were saying yesterday, Madam, you had a mind to hear him—will you give him leave to entertain you now?

Ind. By all means : desire the gentleman to walk in.

[*Ex. Servant.*]

Bev. jun. I fancy you will find something in his hand that is uncommon.

Ind. You are always finding ways, Mr. Bevil, to make life seem less tedious to me—

Enter Music Master.

When the gentleman pleases.

After a Sonata is play'd, Bevil waits on the Master to the door, &c.

Bev. jun. You smile, Madam, to see me so complaisant to one whom I pay for his visit : now, I own, I think it is not enough barely to pay those whose talents are superior to our own (I mean such talents as would become our condition if we had them). Methinks we ought to do something more than barely gratify them for what they do at our command, only because their fortune is below us.

Ind. You say I smile : I assure you it was a smile of approbation ; for, indeed, I cannot but think it the distinguishing part of a gentleman to make his superiority of fortune as easy to his inferiors as he can—Now once more to try him. (*aside*) I must have your opinion upon a subject, which created a debate between my aunt and me, just before you came hither. She would needs have it, that no man ever does any extraordinary kindness or service for a woman but for his own sake.

Bev. jun. Well, Madam, indeed I can't but be of her mind.

Ind. What ! tho' he shou'd maintain, and support

her, without demanding any thing of her on her part?

Bev. jun. Why, Madam, is making an expence in the service of a valuable woman (for such I must suppose her) though she should never do him any favour, nay, though she should never know who did her such service, such a mighty heroic business?

Ind. Certainly, I should think he must be a man of an uncommon mold.

Bev. jun. Dear Madam, why so! 'tis but, at best, a better taste in expence to bestow upon one whom he may think one of the ornaments of the whole creation; to be conscious, that from his superfluity an innocent, a virtuous spirit is supported above the temptations and sorrows of life; that he sees satisfaction, health and gladness in her countenance while he enjoys the happiness of seeing her (as that I will suppose too, or he must be too abstracted, too insensible) I say, if he is allowed to delight in that prospect; alas! what mighty matter is there in all this!

Ind. No mighty matter in so disinterested a friendship?

Bev. jun. Disinterested! I can't think him so; your hero, Madam, is no more than what every gentleman ought to be, and I believe very many are—He is only one, who takes more delight in reflections than in sensations. He is more pleased with thinking than eating: that's the utmost you can say of him—Why, Madam, a greater expence than all this men lay out upon an unnecessary stable of horses.

Ind. Can you be sincere in what you say?

Bev. jun. You may depend upon it, if you know any such man, he does not love dogs inordinately.

Ind. No, that he does not.

Bev. jun. Nor cards, nor dice.

Ind. No.

Bev. jun. Nor bottle companions.

Ind. No.

Bev. jun. Nor loose women.

Ind. No, I'm sure he does not.

Bev. jun. Take my word then, if your admired hero is not liable to any of these kind of demands, there's no such preeminence in this as you imagine: nay, this way of expence you speak of, is what exalts and raises him that has a taste for it: and, at the same time, his delight is incapable of satiety, disgust, or penitence.

Ind. But still I insist his having no private interest in the action, makes it prodigious, almost incredible.

Bev. jun. Dear Madam, I never knew you more mistaken: why, who can be more an usurer, than he, who lays out his money in such valuable purchases? If pleasure be worth purchasing, how great a pleasure is it to him, who has a true taste of life, to ease an aching heart, to see the human countenance lighted up into smiles of joy on the receipt of a bit of ore, which is superfluous, and otherwise useless in a man's own pocket! What cou'd a man do better with his cash? This is the effect of an humane disposition, where there is only a general tie of nature and common necessity. What then

must it be when we serve an object of merit, of admiration!

Ind. Well! the more you argue against it, the more I shall admire the generosity.

Bev. jun. Nay, nay—then, Madam, 'tis time to fly, after a declaration that my opinion strengthens my adversary's argument—I had best hasten to my appointment with Mr. Myrtle, and be gone while we are friends, and—before things are brought to an extremity. [*Exit carelessly.*]

Enter Isabella.

Isab. Well, Madam, what think you of him now? pray.

Ind. I protest, I begin to fear he is wholly disinterested in what he does for me. On my heart, he has no other view but the meer pleasure of doing it, and has neither good nor bad designs upon me.

Isab. Ah! dear Niece! don't be in fear of both. I'll warrant you, you will know time enough that he is not indifferent.

Ind. You please me when you tell me so: for, if he has any wishes towards me, I know he will not pursue them but with honour.

Isab. I wish I were as confident of one as t'other—I saw the respectful downcast of his eye, when you caught him gazing at you during the music: he, I warrant, was surpris'd as if he had been taken stealing your watch. Oh! the undissembled guilty look!

Ind. But did you observe any such thing, really?

I thought he look'd most charmingly graceful! how engaging is modesty in a man, when one knows there is a great mind within!—so tender a confusion! and yet, in other respects, so much himself, so collected, so dauntless, so determin'd!

Isab. Ah! Niece! there is a sort of bashfulness, which is the best engine to carry on a shameless purpose: some men's modesty serves their wickedness, as hypocrisy gains the respect due to piety: but I will own to you, there is one hopeful symptom, if there could be such a thing as a disinterested Lover; but 'tis all a perplexity till—till—till—

Ind. Till what?

Isab. Till I know whether Mr. Myrtle and Mr. Bevil are really friends or foes—And that I will be convinced of before I sleep: for you shall not be deceiv'd.

Ind. I'm sure I never shall, if your fears can guard me: in the mean time I'll wrap myself up in the integrity of my own heart, nor dare to doubt of his:

As conscious honour all his actions steers,
So conscious innocence dispels my fears.

[*Ex.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

A C T I I I.

S C E N E I.

*Sealand's House.**Enter Tom meeting Phillis.*

T O M.

WELL, Madam, as unhappy as you are, at present, pleased to make me, I would not, in the general, be any other than what I am; I would not be a bit wiser, a bit richer, a bit taller, a bit shorter than I am at this instant. [*Looking stedfastly at her.*]

Phil. Did ever any body doubt, Master 'Thomas, but that you were extremely satisfied with your sweet self?

Tom. I am indeed — The thing I have least reason to be satisfied with is my fortune, and I am glad of my poverty : perhaps, if I were rich, I should overlook the finest woman in the world that wants nothing but riches to be thought so.

Phil. How prettily was that said ! But I'll have a great deal more, before I'll say one word. [*Aside.*]

Tom. I should, perhaps, have been stupidly above her, had I not been her equal; and by not being her equal, never had opportunity of being her Slave. I am my master's Servant for hire; I am my mistress's from choice, wou'd she but approve my passion.

Phil. I think, 'tis the first time I ever heard you

speak of it with any sense of the anguish, if you really do suffer any.

Tom. Ah! Phillis, can you doubt after what you have seen!

Phil. I know not what I have seen, nor what I have heard.

Tom. Oh! Phillis, Phillis, shorten my torment, and declare you pity me.

Phil. I believe 'tis very sufferable; the pain is not so exquisite but that you may bear it a little longer.

Tom. O my charming Phillis, if all depended on my fair one's will I could with glory suffer— But, dearest creature, consider our miserable state.

Phil. How miserable!

Tom. We are miserable to be in Love, and under the command of others than those we love—with that generous passion in the heart, to be sent to and fro' on errands, call'd, check'd and rated on the meanest trifles! Oh! Phillis, you don't know how many China cups and glasses my passion for you has made me break: you have broken my fortune as well as my heart.

Phil. Well, Mr. Thomas, I cannot but own to you that I believe your master writes, and you speak the best of any men in the world. Never was woman so well pleas'd with a letter as my young Lady was with his, and this is an answer to it.

[Gives him a letter.

Tom. This was well done, my dearest; consider, we must strike out some pretty livelihood for ourselves by closing their affairs: it will be nothing

for them to give us a little being of our own, some small tenement out of their large possessions : whatever they give us, 'twill be more than what they keep for themselves : one acre, with Phillis, wou'd be worth a whole county without her.

Phil. Oh! could I but believe you!

Tom. If not the utterance, believe the touch of my lips. *[Kisses her.]*

Phil. There's no contradicting you; how closely you argue, Tom!

Tom. And will closer in due time. But I must hasten with this letter, to hasten towards the possession of you.

Phil. Good Tom, don't kiss me above once, and be gone—Lard! we have been fooling and toying, and not consider'd the main business of our masters and mistresses.

Tom. Why, their business is to be fooling and toying as soon as the parchments are ready.

Phil. Well remember'd—parchments—my Lady, to my knowledge, is preparing writings between her coxcomb cousin Cimberton and my mistress; though my master has an eye to the parchments already prepar'd between your master Mr. Bevil and my mistress; and, I believe, my mistress herself has sign'd and seal'd, in her heart, to Mr. Myrtle—Did I not bid you kiss me but once and be gone? but I know you won't be satisfied.

Tom. No, you smooth creature, how should I!

[Kissing her hand.]

Phil. Well, since you are so humble, or so cool, as to ravish my hand only, I'll take my leave of

you like a great Lady, and you a man of quality.
(*They salute formally.*) [Exit Tom.

Enter Lucinda.

Luc. Who was that you were hurrying away?

Phil. One that I had no mind to part with.

Luc. Why did you turn him away then?

Phil. For your Ladyship's service, to carry your Ladyship's letter to his master: I could hardly get the rogue away.

Luc. Why, has he so little love for his master?

Phil. No; but he has so much love for his mistress.

Luc. But I thought I heard him kiss you. Why do you suffer that?

Phil. Why, Madam, we vulgar take it to be a sign of Love; we servants, we poor people, that have nothing but our persons to bestow or treat for, are forc'd to deal and bargain by way of sample; and, therefore, as we have no parchments, nor wax necessary in our agreements, we squeeze with our hands, and seal with our lips, to ratify vows and promises.

Luc. But can't you trust one another without such earnest down?

Phil. We don't think it safe, any more than you gentry, to come together without deeds executed.

Luc. Thou art a pert merry hussy.

Phil. I wish, Madam, your Lover and you were as happy as Tom and your servant are.

Luc. You grow impertinent.

Phil. I have done, Madam; and I won't ask

you, what you intend to do with Mr. Myrtle, what your father will do with Mr. Bevil, nor what you all, especially my Lady, mean by admitting Mr. Cimberton as particularly here as if he were married to you already; nay, you are married actually as far as people of quality are.

Luc. How's that?

Phil. You have different beds in the same house.

Luc. Pshaw! I have a very great value for Mr. Bevil, but have absolutely put an end to his pretensions in the letter I gave you for him: but my father, in his heart, still has a mind to him, were it not for this woman they talk of; and I am apt to imagine he is married to her, or never designs to marry at all.

Phil. Then Mr. Myrtle—

Luc. He had my parents' leave to apply to me, and by that has won me and my affections: who is to have this body of mine without them, it seems, is nothing to me; my mother says, 'tis indecent for me to let my thoughts stray about the person of my husband: nay, she says, a maid, rigidly virtuous, tho' she may have been where her Lover was a thousand times, should not have made observations enough to know him from another man, when she sees him in a third place.

Phil. That is more than the severity of a nun; for not to see, when one may, is hardly possible; not to see, when one can't, is very easy: at this rate, Madam, there are a great many whom you have not seen, who—

Luc. Mamma says, the first time you see your

husband should be at that instant he is made so; when your father, with the help of the minister, gives you to him; then you are to see him, then you are to observe and take notice of him, because then you are to obey him.

Phil. But does not my Lady remember you are to love as well as obey?

Luc. To love is a passion, 'tis a desire, and we must have no desires. Oh! I cannot endure the reflection! with what insensibility on my part, with what more than patience, have I been expos'd and offer'd to some aukward booby or other in every county of Great-Britain!

Phil. Indeed, Madam, I wonder I never heard you speak of it before with this indignation.

Luc. Every corner of the land has presented me with a wealthy coxcomb. As fast as one treaty has gone off another has come on, till my name and person have been the tittle-tattle of the whole town: what is this world come to! no shame left! to be barter'd for, like the beasts of the fields, and that, in such an instance as coming together to an entire familiarity and union of soul and body! Oh! and this, without being so much as well-wishers to each other but for encrease of fortune.

Phil. But, Madam, all these vexations will end very soon in one for all. Mr. Cimberton is your mother's kinsman, and three hundred years an older gentleman than any Lover you ever had; for which reason, with that of his prodigious large estate, she is resolved on him, and has sent to consult the

Lawyers accordingly. Nay, has (whether you know it or no) been in treaty with Sir Geoffry who, to join in the settlement, has accepted of a sum to do it, and is every moment expected in town for that purpose.

Luc. How do you get all this intelligence?

Phil. By an art I have, I thank my stars, beyond all the waiting-maids in Great-Britain; the art of list'ning, Madam, for your Ladyship's service.

Luc. I shall soon know as much as you do; leave me, leave me, Phillis; be gone: here, here, I'll turn you out; my mother says I must not converse with my servants tho' I must converse with no one else. [Exit Phillis.]

Enter Mrs. Sealand, and Mr. Cimberton.

Mrs. Seal. How do I admire this noble, this learned taste of yours, and the worthy regard you have to our own ancient and honourable house, in consulting a mean to keep the blood as pure and as regularly descended as may be.

Cimb. Why, really, Madam, the young women of this age are treated with discourses of such a tendency, and their imaginations so bewilder'd in flesh and blood, that a man of reason can't talk to be understood: they have no ideas of happiness, but what are more gross than the gratification of hunger and thirst.

Luc. With how much reflection he is a coxcomb! [Aside.]

Mrs. Seal. We will talk then of business. That girl walking about the room, there, is to be your

wife; she has, I confess, no ideas, no sentiments that speak her born of a thinking mother.

Cimb. I have observ'd her; her lively look, free air, and disengag'd countenance speak her very—

Luc. Very, what?

Cimb. If you please, Madam—to set her a little that way.

Mrs. Seal. Lucinda, say nothing to him; you are not a match for him; when you are married, you may speak to such a husband when you're spoken to. But I am disposing of you above yourself every way.

Cimb. Madam, you cannot but observe the inconveniencies I expose myself to in hopes that your Ladyship will be the consort of my better part: as for the young woman, she is rather an impediment than a help to a man of letters and speculation. Madam, there is no reflection, no philosophy can at all times subdue the sensitive life, but the animal shall sometimes carry away the man. Ha!—ay, the vermilion of her lips—

Luc. Pray, don't talk of me thus.

Cimb. The pretty enough—pant of her bosom.

Luc. Sir! Madam, don't you hear him?

Cimb. Her forward chest—

Luc. Intolerable!

Cimb. High health—

Luc. The grave, easy impudence of him!

Cimb. Proud heart—

Luc. Stupid coxcomb!

Cimb. I say, Madam, her impatience, while we are looking at her, throws out all attractions—

her arms—her neck—what a spring in her step!

Luc. Don't you run me over thus, you strange unaccountable!

Cimb. What an elasticity in her veins and arteries!

Luc. I have no veins, no arteries.

Mrs. Seal. Oh! child, hear him, he talks finely, he's a scholar, he knows what you have.

Cimb. The speaking invitation of her shape, the gathering of herself up, and the indignation you see in the pretty little thing—now I am considering her, on this occasion, but as one that is to be pregnant.

Luc. The familiar, learned, unseasonable puppy! (*aside*) Monster! there's no bearing it. The hideous sot! There's no enduring it, to be thus survey'd like a steed at sale!

Cimb. At sale! she's very illiterate—But she's very well-limb'd too; I see what she is.

[*Exit Lucinda in a rage.*

Mrs. Seal. Go, you creature, I am asham'd of you.

Cimb. No harm done — you know, Madam, the better sort of people, as I observ'd to you, treat by their lawyers of weddings (*adjusting himself at the glass*), and the woman in the bargain, like the mansion house in the sale of the estate, is thrown in, and what that is, whether good or bad, is not at all consider'd.

Mrs. Seal. I grant it, and therefore make no demand for her youth and beauty, and every other accomplishment, as the common world think 'em, because she is not polite. I cannot make her any other than she is; or say she is much better than

the other young women of this age, or fit for much beside being a mother; but I have given directions for the marriage-settlement which, when executed, makes you capable of settling what is due to Lucinda's fortune : herself, as I told you, I say nothing of.

Cimb. No, no, no, indeed, Madam, it is not usual, and I must depend upon my own reflection and philosophy not to overstock my family.

Mrs. Seal. I cannot help her, cousin Cimberton, but she is, for ought I see, as well as the daughter of any body else.

Cimb. That is very true, Madam.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

A C T I V.

SCENE I.

Bevil junior's *Lodgings.*

Bevil. jun. *with a Letter in his hand, follow'd by Tom.*

T O M.

UPON my life, Sir, I know nothing of the matter: I never open'd my lips to Mr. Myrtle about any thing of your honour's letter to Madam Lucinda.

Bev. What's the fool in such a fright for? I don't suppose you did: what I would know is, whether Mr. Myrtle shew'd any suspicion, or ask'd you any questions to lead you to say casually that you had carried any such letter from me this morning?

Tom. Why, Sir, if he did ask me any questions, how could I help it?

Bev. I don't say you could, oaf! I am not questioning you, but him: what did he say to you?

Tom. Why, Sir, when I went to his chambers, as your honour was pleas'd to order me, he ask'd me if I had been at Mr. Sealand's this morning!—So I told him, Sir, I often went thither—because, Sir, if I had not said that, he might have thought there was something more in my going now than at another time.

Bev. Very well!—The fellow's caution, I find

has given him this jealousy. (*aside*) Did he ask you no other questions?

Tom. Yes, Sir—now I remember, Tom, says he, as I came in to your master this morning, he bade you go for an answer to a letter he had sent. Pray did you bring him any? says he—Ah! says I, Sir, your honour is pleas'd to joke with me; you have a mind to know whether I can keep a secret, or not.

Bev. And so, by shewing him you could, you told him you had one.

Tom. Sir—

[*Confus'd.*

Bev. What mean actions does jealousy make a man stoop to! How poorly has he us'd art with a servant to make him betray his own master! Well, and when did he give you this letter for me?

Tom. Sir, he wrote it at his own chambers.

Bev. Very well; and what did he say when you carried him my answer to it?

Tom. He look'd a little out of humour, Sir, and said it was very well.

Bev. I knew he would be grave upon it—wait without.

Tom. Hum! 'gad, I don't like this; I am afraid we are all in the wrong box here. [*Exit Tom.*

Bev. I put on a serenity while my fellow was present, but I have never been more thoroughly disturb'd: this hot man! to write me a challenge on supposed artificial dealing when I profess'd myself his friend! I can live contented without glory, but I cannot suffer shame. What is to be

done ! But first, let me consider Lucinda's letter again. [*Reads.*

“ SIR,
“ I hope it is consistent with the laws a woman
“ ought to impose upon herself to acknowledge,
“ that your manner of declining a treaty of mar-
“ riage in our family, and desiring the refusal may
“ come from me, has something more engaging
“ in it than the courtship of him, who, I fear, will
“ fall to my lot, except your friend exert himself
“ for our common safety and happiness : I have
“ reasons for desiring Mr. Myrtle may not know
“ of this letter till hereafter, and am your most
“ oblig'd humble servant LUCINDA SEALAND.”

Well, but the postscript. [*Reads.*

“ I won't, upon second thoughts, hide any thing
“ from you. But my reason for concealing this,
“ is that Mr. Myrtle has a jealousy in his temper
“ which gives me some terrors ; but my esteem
“ for him inclines me to hope that only an ill
“ effect which sometimes accompanies a tender
“ Love, and what may be cur'd by a careful and
“ unblamable conduct.”

Thus has this Lady made me her friend and confident, and put herself, in a kind, under my protection : I cannot tell him immediately the purport of her letter, unless I could cure him of the violent and untractable passion of jealousy, and so serve him and her, by disobeying her, in the article of secrecy, more than I should by complying with her directions—But then this duelling which custom has impos'd upon every man who would live with

reputation and honour in the world — How must I preserve myself from imputations ! there !—he'll, forsooth, call it, or think it, fear if I explain without fighting—But his letter—I'll read it again—

“ SIR,

“ You have us'd me basely in corresponding,
 “ and carrying on a treaty, where you told me
 “ you were indifferent : I have chang'd my sword
 “ since I saw you, which advertisement I thought
 “ proper to send you against the next meeting
 “ between you and the injur'd

“ CHARLES MYRTLE.”

Enter Tom.

Tom. Mr. Myrtle, Sir—would your honour please to see him !

Bev. Why, you stupid creature, let Mr. Myrtle wait at my Lodgings ! shew him up. [*Exit Tom*] Well ! I am resolv'd upon my carriage to him—He is in love, and in every circumstance of life a little distrustful, which I must allow for—but here he is.

Enter Tom introducing Myrtle.

Bev. Sir, I am extremely oblig'd to you for this honour—But, Sir, you, with your very discerning face, leave the room. [*Exit Tom*] Well, Mr. Myrtle, your commands with me !

Myrt. The time, the place, our long acquaintance, and many other circumstances which affect me on this occasion, oblige me, without farther ceremony or conference, to desire you would not only, as you already have, acknowledge the receipt of my

letter, but also comply with the request in it. I must have farther notice taken of my message than these half lines—"I have yours—I shall be at home"—

Bev. Sir, I own I have received a letter from you in a very unusual style; but as I design every thing, in this matter, shall be your own action, your own seeking, I shall understand nothing but what you are pleas'd to confirm, face to face, and I have already forgotten the contents of your epistle.

Myrt. This cool manner is very agreeable to the abuse you have already made of my simplicity and frankness; and I see your moderation tends to your own advantage, and not mine; to your own safety, not to the consideration of your friend.

Bev. My own safety, Mr. Myrtle!

Myrt. Your own safety, Mr. Bevil.

Bev. Look you, Mr. Myrtle, there's no disguising that I understand what you would be at—But, Sir, you know I have often dared to disapprove of the decisions a tyrant custom has introduc'd to the breach of all laws, both divine and human.

Myrt. Mr. Bevil, Mr. Bevil, it would be a good first principle, in those who have so tender a conscience that way, to have as much abhorrence of doing injuries as—

Bev. As what?

Myrt. As fear of answering for 'em.

Bev. As fear of answering for 'em! But that apprehension is just or blamable according to the object of that fear—I have often told you, in confidence of heart, I abhorred the daring to offend

the author of life, and rushing into his presence—I say, by the very same act, to commit the crime against him, and immediately to urge on to his tribunal.

Myrt. Mr. Bevil, I must tell you, this coolness, this gravity, this shew of conscience, shall never cheat me of my mistress. You have, indeed, the best excuse for life, the hopes of possessing Lucinda: but consider, Sir, I have as much reason to be weary of it, if I am to lose her; and my first attempt to recover her shall be to let her see the dauntless man who is to be her guardian and protector.

Bev. Sir, shew me but the least glimpse of argument, that I am authoriz'd, by my own hand, to vindicate any lawless insult of this nature, and I will shew thee—to chastise thee hardly deserves the name of courage—slight inconsiderate man!—There is, Mr. Myrtle, no such terror in quick anger; and you shall, you know not why, be cool, as you have, you know not why, been warm.

Myrt. Is the woman one loves so little an occasion of anger? You perhaps, who know not what it is to love, who have your ready, your commodious, your foreign trinket for your loose hours, and from your fortune, your specious outward carriage, and other lucky circumstances, an easy way to the possession of a woman of honour; you know nothing of what it is to be alarm'd, to be distracted with anxiety and terror of losing more than life: your marriage, happy man! goes on like common business, and in the interim you have your rambling captive, your Indian princess, for your

soft moments of dalliance, your convenient, your ready Indiana.

Bev. You have touch'd me beyond the patience of a man; and I'm excusable, in the guard of innocence (or from the infirmity of human nature which can hear no more), to accept your invitation, and observe your letter—Sir, I'll attend you.

Enter Tom.

Tom. Did you call, Sir? I thought you did: I heard you speak aloud.

Bev. Yes, go call a coach.

Tom. Sir—Master—Mr. Myrtle—friends—Gentlemen—what d'ye mean? I am but a servant, or—

Bev. call a coach. [*Exit Tom.*

[*A long pause, walking sullenly by each other. (aside)* Shall I (though provok'd to the uttermost) recover myself at the entrance of a third person, and that my servant too, and not have respect enough to all I have ever been receiving from infancy, the obligation to the best of fathers, to an unhappy virgin too, whose life depends on mine! [*Shutting the door.*

(*To Myrtle*) I have, thank Heaven, had time to recollect myself, and shall not, for fear of what such a rash man as you think of me, keep longer unexplain'd the false appearances, under which your infirmity of temper makes you suffer; when, perhaps, too much regard to a false point of honour makes me prolong that suffering.

Myrt. I am sure, Mr. Bevil cannot doubt, but I

would rather have satisfaction from his innocence than his sword.

Bev. Why then would you ask it first that way?

Myrt. Consider, you kept your temper yourself no longer than till I spoke to the disadvantage of her you lov'd.

Bev. True. But, let me tell you, I have sav'd you from the most exquisite distress, even tho' you had succeeded in the dispute. I know you so well that I am sure, to have found this letter about a man you had kill'd, would have been worse than death to you—Read it—When he is thoroughly mortified, and shame has got the better of jealousy, when he has seen himself thoroughly, he will deserve to be assisted towards obtaining Lucinda.

Myrt. With what a superiority has he turn'd the injury on me as the aggressor! I begin to fear I have been too far transported—*A treaty in our family!* is not that saying too much? I shall relapse—But, I find (on the postscript) *something like jealousy*—with what face can I see my benefactor! my advocate! whom I have treated like a betrayer—Oh! Bevil, with what words shall I—

Bev. There need none; to convince is much more than to conquer.

Myrt. But can you—

Bev. You have o'erpaid the inquietude you gave me in the change I see in you towards me: alas! what machines are we! thy face is alter'd to that of another man; to that of my companion, my friend.

Myrt. That I could be such a precipitant wretch!

Bev. Pray, no more.

Myrt. Let me reflect how many friends have died by the hands of friends for want of temper; and you must give me leave to say again and again how much I am beholden to that superior spirit you have subdu'd me with—what had become of one of us, or perhaps both, had you been as weak as I was, and as incapable of reason!

Bev. I congratulate to us both the escape from ourselves, and hope the memory of it will make us dearer friends than ever.

Myrt. Dear Bevil, your friendly conduct has convinc'd me that there is nothing manly but what is conducted by reason, and agreeably to the practice of virtue and justice: and yet, how many have been sacrific'd to that Idol, the unreasonable Opinion of men! Nay, they are so ridiculous in it, that they often use their swords against each other with dissembled anger, and real fear:

Betray'd by honour, and compell'd by shame,
They hazard being to preserve a name;
Nor dare enquire into the dread mistake,
'Till plung'd in sad eternity they wake. [Exeunt.

SCENE, St. James's Park.

Enter Sir John Bevil, and Mr. Sealand.

Sir J. Bev. Give me leave, however, Mr. Sealand, as we are upon treaty for uniting our families, to mention only the business of an ancient house—Genealogy and descent are to be of some consideration in an affair of this sort—

Mr. Seal. Genealogy, and descent!—Sir, there has been in our family a very large one. There was Galfrid, the father of Edward, the father of Ptolemy, the father of Crassus, the father of Earl Richard, the father of Henry the marquis, the father of duke John—

Sir J. Bev. What! do you rave, Mr. Sealand! all these great names in your family?

Mr. Seal. These! yes, Sir—I have heard my father name 'em all and more.

Sir J. Bev. Ay, Sir—and did he say they were all in your family?

Mr. Seal. Yes, Sir, he kept 'em all—he was the greatest Cocker in England—he said, duke John won him many battles, and never lost one.

Sir J. Bev. Oh! Sir, your servant; you are laughing at my laying any stress upon descent—but I must tell you, Sir, I never knew any one, but he that wanted that advantage, turn it into ridicule.

Mr. Seal. And I never knew any one, who had many better advantages, put that into his account—But, Sir John, value yourself as you please upon your ancient House, I am to talk freely of every thing you are pleas'd to put into your bill of rates on this occasion—yet, Sir, I have made no objections to your Son's family—'Tis his morals that I doubt.

Sir J. Bev. Sir, I can't help saying, that what might injure a citizen's credit may be no stain to a gentleman's honour.

Mr. Seal. Sir John, the honour of a gentleman is liable to be tainted by as small a matter as the

credit of a trader. We are talking of a marriage, and in such a case the father of a young woman will not think it an addition to the honour, or credit of her Lover—that he is a keeper—

Sir J. Bev. Mr. Sealand, don't take upon you to spoil my Son's marriage with any woman else.

Mr. Seal. Sir John, let him apply to any woman else, and have as many mistresses as he pleases—

Sir J. Bev. My Son, Sir, is a discreet and sober gentleman—

Mr. Seal. Sir, I never saw a man that wench'd soberly and discreetly that ever left it off—the decency observ'd in the practice hides, even from the sinner, the iniquity of it. They pursue it, not that their appetites hurry 'em away, but, I warrant you, because 'tis their opinion they may do it.

Sir J. Bev. Were what you suspect a truth—do you design to keep your daughter a virgin 'till you find a man unblemish'd that way?

Mr. Seal. Sir, as much a cit as you take me for, I know the town and the world—and give me leave to say, that we merchants are a species of gentry that have grown into the world this last century, and are as honourable, and almost as useful as you landed folks that have always thought yourselves so much above us. For your trading, forsooth! is extended no farther than a load of hay, or a fat ox—You are pleasant people, indeed! because you are generally bred up to be lazy, therefore, I warrant you, industry is dishonourable.

Sir J. Bev. Be not offended, Sir; let us go back to our point.

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Mr. Seal. Oh! not at all offended—but I don't love to leave any part of the account unclos'd—look you, Sir John, comparisons are odious, and more particularly so on occasions of this kind, when we are projecting races that are to be made out of both sides of the comparison.

Sir J. Bev. But my Son, Sir, is, in the eye of the world, a gentleman of merit.

Mr. Seal. I own to you, I think him so—But, Sir John, I am a man exercis'd, and experienc'd in chances and disasters. I lost, in my earlier years, a very fine wife, and, with her, a poor little infant; this makes me, perhaps, over cautious to preserve the second bounty of Providence to me, and be as careful as I can of this child—you'll pardon me; my poor girl, Sir, is as valuable to me as your boasted Son to you.

Sir J. Bev. Why, that's one very good reason, Mr. Sealand, why I wish my Son had her.

Mr. Seal. There is nothing but this strange Lady here, this *incognita*, that can be objected to him—here and there a man falls in love with an artful creature, and gives up all the motives of life to that one passion.

Sir J. Bev. A man of my Son's understanding cannot be suppos'd to be one of them.

Mr. Seal. Very wise men have been so enslav'd; and when a man marries with one of them upon his hands, whether mov'd from the demand of the world, or slighter reasons—

Sir J. Bev. But pray consider, Sir, my Son—

Mr. Seal. Look you, Sir, I'll make the matter

short : this unknown Lady, as I told you, is all the objection I have to him : but, one way or other, he is, or has been, certainly engag'd to her — I am therefore resolv'd, this very afternoon, to visit her : now from her behaviour, or appearance, I shall soon be let into what I may fear or hope for.

Sir J. Bev. Sir, I am very confident there can be nothing enquir'd into, relating to my Son, that will not, upon being understood, turn to his advantage.

Mr. Seal. I hope that as sincerely as you believe it — Sir J. Bevil, when I am satisfied in this great point, if your Son's conduct answers the character you give him, I shall wish your alliance more than that of any gentleman in Great-Britain, and so your servant. [*Exit.*

Sir J. Bev. He is gone, in a way but barely civil ; but his great wealth, and the merit of his only child, the heiress of it, are not to be lost for a little peevishness —

Enter Humphrey.

Oh ! Humphrey, you are come in a seasonable minute ; I want to talk to thee ; my head and heart are on the rack about my Son.

Humph. Sir, you may trust his discretion ; I am sure you may.

Sir J. Bev. Why, I do believe I may ; and yet I'm in a thousand fears when I lay this vast wealth before me : when I consider his prepossessions, either generous to a folly in an honourable Love, or abandon'd past redemption in a vicious one ; and, from the one or the other, his insensibility to the fairest prospect towards doubling our estate : a

a father who knows how useful wealth is, and how necessary, even to those who despise it, I say, a father, Humphrey, a father cannot bear it.

Humph. Be not transported, Sir; you will grow incapable of taking any resolution in your perplexity.

Sir J. Bev. Yet, as angry as I am with him, I would not have him surpris'd in any thing—This mercantile rough man may go grossly into the examination of this matter, and talk to the gentlewoman so as to—

Humph. No, I hope, not in an abrupt manner.

Sir J. Bev. No, I hope not! why, dost thou know any thing of her, or of him, or of any thing of it, or all of it?

Humph. My dear master, I know so much that I told him this very day you had reason to be secretly out of humour about her.

Sir J. Bev. Did you go so far? Well, what said he to that?

Humph. His words were, looking upon me steadfastly: Humphrey, says he, that woman is a woman of honour.

Sir J. Bev. How! Do you think he is married to her, or designs to marry her?

Humph. I can say nothing to the latter—But he says he can marry no one without your consent while you are living.

Sir J. Bev. If he said so much, I know he scorns to break his word with me.

Humph. I am sure of that.

Sir J. Bev. You are sure of that—Well; that's some comfort—Then I have nothing to do but to

see the bottom of this matter during this present ruffle—Oh! Humphrey—

Humph. You are not ill, I hope, Sir.

Sir J. Bev. Yes, a man is very ill that's in a very ill humour: to be a father is to be in care for one whom you oftener disoblige than please by that very care—Oh! that Sons could know the duty to a father before they themselves are fathers!—But, perhaps, you'll say now that I am one of the happiest fathers in the world; but, I assure you, that of the very happiest is not a condition to be envied.

Humph. Sir, your pain arises, not from the thing itself, but from your particular sense of it—You are overfond; nay, give me leave to say, you are unjustly apprehensive from your fondness: my master Bevil never disoblig'd you, and he will, I know he will, do every thing you ought to expect.

Sir J. Bev. He won't take all this money with this girl—For ought I know, he will, forsooth, have so much moderation as to think he ought not to force his liking for any consideration.

Humph. He is to marry her, not you; he is to live with her, not you, Sir.

Sir J. Bev. I know not what to think: I know, nothing can be more miserable than to be in this doubt—Follow me; I must come to some resolution. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, Bevil junior's Lodgings.

Enter Tom and Phillis.

Tom. Well, Madam, if you must speak with Mr. Myrtle, you shall; he is now with my master in the library.

Phil. But you must leave me alone with him, for he can't make me a present, nor I so handsomely take any thing from him before you; it would not be decent.

Tom. It will be very decent, indeed, for me to retire, and leave my Mistress with another man.

Phil. He is a gentleman, and will treat one properly—

Tom. I believe so—but, however, I won't be far off, and therefore will venture to trust you: I'll call him to you. [*Exit Tom.*

Phil. What a deal of pother and sputter here is between my Mistress and Mr. Myrtle from meer punctilio! I could any hour of the day get her to her Lover, and would do it—but she, forsooth, will allow no plot to get him; but, if he can come to her, I know she would be glad of it: I must therefore do her an acceptable violence, and surprise her into his arms. I am sure I go by the best rule imaginable: if she were my maid, I should think her the best servant in the world for doing so by me.

Enter Myrtle and Tom.

Oh! Sir, you and Mr. Bevil are fine gentlemen to let a Lady remain under such difficulties as my poor Mistress, and not attempt to set her at liberty, or release her from the danger of being instantly married to Cimberton.

Myrt. Tom has been telling—but what is to be done?

Phil. What is to be done when a man can't come at his Mistress!—Why, can't you fire our House, or the next House to us, to make us run out, and you take us?

Myrt. How! Mrs. Phillis—

Phil. Ay—let me see that rogue deny to fire a House, make a riot, or any other little thing when there were no other way to come at me!

Tom. I am oblig'd to you, Madam.

Phil. Why, don't we hear every day of people's hanging themselves for Love, and won't they venture the hazard of being hang'd for Love!—Oh! were I a man!—

Myrt. What manly thing would you have me undertake, according to your Ladyship's notion of a man?

Phil. Only be at once what, one time or other, you may be, wish to be, or must be—

Myrt. Dear girl, talk plainly to me, and consider, I, in my condition, can't be in very good humour—you say, to be at once what I must be.

Phil. Ay, ay—I mean no more than to be an old man; I saw you do it very well at the masquerade: in a word, old Sir Geoffry Cimberton—is every hour expected in town to join in the deeds and settlements for marrying Mr. Cimberton—He is half blind, half lame, half deaf, half dumb; tho', as to his passions and desires, he is as warm and ridiculous as when in the heat of youth—

Tom. Come to the business, and don't keep the gentleman in suspense for the pleasure of being courted, as you serve me.

Phil. I saw you at the masquerade act such a one to perfection; go, and put on that very habit and come to our House as Sir Geoffry. There is not one there, but myself, knows his person; I was

born in the parish where he is Lord of the manor. I have seen him often and often at church in the country. Do not hesitate, but come thither; they will think you bring a certain security against Mr. Myrtle, and you bring Mr. Myrtle. Leave the rest to me; I leave this with you, and expect—They don't, I told you, know you; they think you out of town, which you might as well be for ever if you lose this opportunity—I must be gone; I know I am wanted at home.

Myrt. My dear Phillis! [*Catches and kisses her, and gives her money.*]

Phil. O fie! my kisses are not my own; you have committed violence; but I'll carry 'em to the right owner. [*Tom kisses her*] Come, see me down stairs [*to Tom*] and leave the Lover to think of his last game for the prize. [*Exeunt Tom and Phillis.*]

Myrt. I think I will instantly attempt this wild expedient—The extravagance of it will make me less suspected, and it will give me an opportunity to assert my own right to Lucinda without whom I cannot live: but I am so mortified at this conduct of mine towards poor Bevil; he must think meanly of me—I know not how to reassume myself, and be in spirits enough for such an adventure as this—Yet I must attempt it, if it be only to be near Lucinda under her present perplexities; and sure—

The next delight to transport with the fair
Is to relieve her in her hours of care.

[*Exit.*]

END OF THE FOURTH ACT,

A C T V.

SCENE I.

Sealand's House.

Enter Phillis, with lights, before Myrtle, disguis'd like old Sir Geoffry, supported by Mrs. Sealand, Lucinda and Cimberton.

Mrs. SEALAND.

NOW I have seen you thus far, Sir Geoffry, you will excuse me a moment, while I give my necessary orders for your accommodation. [*Exit Mrs. Seal.*

Myrt. I have not seen you, cousin Cimberton, since you were ten years old; and as it is incumbent on you to keep up our name and family, I shall, upon very reasonable terms, join with you in a settlement to that purpose. Tho', I must tell you, cousin, this is the first merchant that has married into our House.

Luc. Deuce on 'em! am I a merchant because my father is? [*Aside.*

Myrt. But is he directly a trader at this time?

Cimb. There's no hiding the disgrace, Sir; he trades to all parts of the world.

Myrt. We never had one of our family before who descended from persons that did any thing.

Cimb. Sir, since it is a girl that they have, I am, for the honour of my family, willing to take it in again, and to sink her into our name, and no harm done.

Myrt. 'Tis prudently and generously resolv'd—
Is this the young thing?

Cimb. Yes, Sir.

Phil. Good Madam, don't be out of humour,
but let them run to the utmost of their extravagance
—Hear them out.

Myrt. Can't I see her nearer? my eyes are but weak.

Phil. Besides, I am sure the uncle has something
worth your notice. I'll take care to get off the
young one, and leave you to observe what may be
wrought out of the old one for your good. [*Exit.*

Cimb. Madam, this old gentleman, your great
uncle, desires to be introduced to you, and to see
you nearer. Approach, Sir.

Myrt. By your leave, young Lady — (*puts on
spectacles*) Cousin Cimberton, she has exactly
that sort of neck and bosom for which my sister
Gertrude was so much admired in the year sixty
one before the French dresses first discovered any
thing in women below the chin.

Luc. (*Aside*) What a very odd situation am I
in! tho' I cannot but be diverted at the extrava-
gance of their humours equally unsuitable to their
age—Chin, quotha—I don't believe my passionate
Lover there knows whether I have one or not—
Ha! ha!

Myrt. Madam, I would not willingly offend,
but I have a better glass— [*Pulls out a long one.*

Enter Phillis to Cimberton.

Phil. Sir, my Lady desires to shew the apartment
to you that she intends for Sir Geoffry.

Cimb. Well, Sir, by that time you have sufficiently gazed, and sunned yourself in the beauties of my spouse there, I will wait on you again.

[*Exeunt Cimb. and Phill.*]

Myrt. Were it not, Madam, that I might be troublesome, there is something of importance, tho' we are alone, which I would say more safely from being heard.

Luc. There is something in this old fellow, methinks, that raises my curiosity.

Myrt. To be free, Madam, I as heartily condemn this kinsman of mine as you do, and am sorry to see so much beauty and merit devoted, by your parents, to so insensible a possessor.

Luc. Surprising!—I hope then, Sir, you will not contribute to the wrong you are so generous as to pity, whatever may be the interest of your family.

Myrt. This hand of mine shall never be employ'd to sign any thing against your good and happiness.

Luc. I am sorry, Sir, it is not in my power to make you proper acknowledgments; but there is a gentleman in the world whose gratitude will, I am sure, be worthy of the favour.

Myrt. All the thanks I desire, Madam, are in your power to give.

Luc. Name them, and command them.

Myrt. Only, Madam, that the first time you are alone with your Lover, you will, with open arms, receive him—

Luc. As willingly as his heart could wish it.

Myrt. Thus then he claims your promise! Oh! Lucinda!

Luc. Oh! a cheat! a cheat! a cheat!

Myrt. Hush! 'tis I, 'tis I, your Lover, Myrtle himself, Madam.

Luc. Oh! bless me! what a rashness, and folly to surprise me so!—But hush!—my mother—

Enter Mrs. Sealand, Cimberton, and Phillis.

Mrs. Seal. How now! what's the matter?

Luc. Oh! Madam, as soon as you left the room, my uncle fell into a sudden fit, and—and—so I cried out for help to support him, and conduct him to his chamber.

Mrs. Seal. That was kindly done. Alas! how do you find yourself?

Myrt. Never was taken in so odd a way in my life—pray, lead me. Oh! I was talking here—pray, carry me to my cousin Cimberton's young Lady—

Mrs. Seal. (aside) My cousin Cimberton's young Lady! How zealous he is, even in his extremity, for the match! a right Cimberton!

[Cimberton and Lucinda lead him as one in pain, &c.]

Cimb. Pox! uncle, you will pull my ear off.

Luc. Pray, uncle, you will squeeze me to death.

Mrs. Seal. No matter, no matter—he knows not what he does. Come, Sir, shall I help you out?

Myrt. By no means, I'll trouble no body but my young cousins here. [They lead him off.]

Phil. But pray, Madam, does your Ladyship intend that Mr. Cimberton shall really marry my young mistress at last? I don't think he likes her.

Mrs. Seal. That's not material: men of his

speculation are above desires—but, be it as it may, now I have given old Sir Geoffry the trouble of coming up to sign and seal, with what countenance can I be off?

Phil. As well as with twenty others, Madam; it is the glory and honour of a great fortune to live in continual treaties, and still to break off: it looks great, Madam.

Mrs. Seal. True, Phillis—yet to return our blood again into the Cimbertons' is an honour not to be rejected—but were not you saying, that Sir John Bevil's creature, Humphrey, has been with Mr. Sealand?

Phil. Yes, Madam; I overheard them agree, that Mr. Sealand should go himself and visit this unknown Lady that Mr. Bevil is so great with; and if he found nothing there to fright him, that Mr. Bevil should still marry my young mistress.

Mrs. Seal. How! nay then, he shall find she is my daughter, as well as his: I'll follow him this instant, and take the whole family along with me: the disputed power of disposing of my own daughter shall be at an end this very night—I'll live no longer in anxiety for a little hussy that hurts my appearance wherever I carry her, and for whose sake I seem to be at all regarded, and that in the best of my days.

Phil. Indeed, Madam, if she were married, your Ladyship might very well be taken for Mr. Sealand's daughter.

Mrs. Seal. Nay, when the chit has not been with me, I have heard the men say as much—I'll

no longer cut off the greatest pleasure of a woman's life (the shining in assemblies) by her forward anticipation of the respect that's due to her superior—she shall down to Cimberton-hall—she shall—she shall.

Phil. I hope, Madam, I shall stay with your Ladyship.

Mrs. Seal. Thou shalt, Phillis, and I'll place thee then more about me—But order chairs immediately—I'll be gone this minute. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, *Charing-cross.*

Enter Mr. Sealand, and Humphrey.

Mr. Seal. I am very glad, Mr. Humphrey, that you agree with me that it is for our common good I should look thoroughly into this matter.

Humph. I am, indeed, of that opinion; for there is no artifice, nothing concealed in our family, which ought in justice to be known. I need not desire you, Sir, to treat the Lady with care and respect.

Mr. Seal. Master Humphrey—I shall not be rude, tho' I design to be a little abrupt, and come into the matter at once to see how she will bear upon a surprise.

Humph. That's the door, Sir, I wish you success. (*While Humphrey speaks, Sealand consults his Table-book*) [*Exit.*]

Mr. Seal. I think this is the door (*Knocks*) I'll carry this matter with an air of authority, to enquire, tho' I make an errand, to begin discourse.

(Knocks again, and enter a Foot-Boy) So, young man! is your Lady within?

Boy. Alack, Sir! I am but a country Boy—I don't know whether she is, or noa : but an you'll stay a bit, I'll goa, and ask the gentlewoman that's with her.

Mr. Seal. Why, sirrah, tho' you are a country Boy, you can see, can't you? you know whether she is at home when you see her, don't you?

Boy. Nay, nay, I'm not such a country Lad neither, Master, to think she's at home because I see her : I have been in town but a month, and I lost one place already for believing my own eyes.

Mr. Seal. Why, sirrah! have you learnt to lie already?

Boy. Ah! Master, things that are lies in the country are not lies in London—I begin to know my business a little better than so—but an you please to walk in, I'll call a gentlewoman to you that can tell you for certain—she can make bold to ask my Lady herself.

Mr. Seal. Oh! then she is within, I find, tho' you dare not say so.

Boy. Nay, nay, that's neither here, nor there : what's matter whether she is within or not if she has not a mind to see any body?

Mr. Seal. I can't tell, sirrah! whether you are arch, or simple ; but, however, get me a direct answer, and here's a shilling for you.

Boy. Will you please to walk in, I'll see what I can do for you.

Mr. Seal. I see you will be fit for your business, in time, child. But I expect to meet with nothing but extraordinaries in such a house.

Boy. Such a house! Sir, you han't seen it yet: pray walk in.

Mr. Seal. Sir, I'll wait upon you. [Exeunt.

SCENE, Indiana's House.

Enter Isabella.

Isab. What anxiety do I feel for this poor creature! what will be the end of her! such a languishing unreserv'd passion for a man that at last must certainly leave, or ruin her! and perhaps both! then the aggravation of the distress is, that she does not believe he will—Not but I must own, if they are both what they would seem, they are made for one another as much as Adam and Eve were; for there is no other of their kind but themselves.

Enter Boy.

So, Daniel, what news with you?

Boy. Madam, there's a gentleman below would speak with my Lady.

Isab. Sirrah! don't you know Mr. Bevil yet?

Boy. Madam, 'tis not the gentleman who comes every day, and asks for you, and won't go in till he knows whether you are with her or not.

Isab. Ha! that's a particular I did not know before: well, be it who it will, let him come up to me. [Exit Boy, and re-enters with Mr. Sealand.

Isabella looks amaz'd.

Mr. Seal. Madam, I can't blame your being a

little surpris'd to see a perfect stranger make a visit, and—

Isab. I am indeed surpris'd—I see he does not know me. [*Aside.*

Mr. Seal. You are very prettily lodg'd here, Madam; in troth you seem to have every thing in plenty—a thousand a year, I warrant you, upon this pretty nest of rooms, and the dainty one within them. [*Aside, and looking about.*

Isab. (apart) Twenty years, it seems, have less effect in the alteration of a man of thirty than of a girl of fourteen—he's almost still the same: but, alas! I find, by other men as well as himself, I am not what I was—As soon as he spoke I was convinc'd 'twas he—How shall I contain my surprise and satisfaction!—he must not know me yet.

Mr. Seal. Madam, I hope I don't give you any disturbance; but there is a young Lady here with whom I have a particular business to discourse, and I hope she will admit me to that favour.

Isab. Why, Sir, have you had any notice concerning her? I wonder who could give it you.

Mr. Seal. That, Madam, is fit only to be communicated to herself.

Isab. Well, Sir, you shall see her—I find he knows nothing yet, nor shall from me: I am resolv'd, I will observe this interlude, this sport of nature, and of fortune—You shall see her presently, Sir; for now I am as a mother, and will trust her with you. [*Exit.*

Mr. Seal. As a mother! right; that's the old phrase for one of those commode ladies who lend

out beauty for hire to young gentlemen that have pressing occasions. But here comes the precious Lady herself. In troth, a very sightly woman.

Enter Indiana.

Ind. I am told, Sir, you have some affair that requires your speaking with me.

Mr. Seal. Yes, Madam : there came to my hands a bill drawn by Mr. Bevil which is payable to-morrow ; and he, in the intercourse of business, sent it to me who have cash of his, and desired me to send a servant with it; but I have made bold to bring you the money myself.

Ind. Sir, was that necessary ?

Mr. Seal. No, Madam; but, to be free with you, the fame of your beauty, and the regard which Mr. Bevil is a little too well known to have for you, excited my curiosity.

Ind. Too well known to have for me ! Your sober appearance, Sir, which my friend describ'd, made me expect no rudeness or absurdity at least—Who's there !—Sir, if you pay the money to a servant 'twill be as well.

Mr. Seal. Pray, Madam, be not offended ; I came hither on an innocent, nay, a virtuous design ; and, if you will have patience to hear me, it may be as useful to you, as you are in friendship with Mr. Bevil, as to my only daughter whom I was this day disposing of.

Ind. You make me hope, Sir, I have mistaken you ; I am composed again ; be free, say on — what I am afraid to hear. [*Aside.*

Mr. Seal. I fear'd, indeed, an unwarranted passion here, but I did not think it was in abuse of so worthy an object, so accomplish'd a Lady, as your sense and mien bespeak—but the youth of our age care not what merit and virtue they bring to shame, so they gratify—

Ind. Sir—you are going into very great errors—but as you are pleas'd to say you see something in me that has chang'd at least the colour of your suspicions, so has your appearance alter'd mine, and made me earnestly attentive to what has any way concern'd you to enquire into my affairs and character.

Mr. Seal. How sensibly! with what an air she talks!

Ind. Good Sir, be seated—and tell me tenderly—keep all your suspicions concerning me alive, that you may in a proper and prepared way acquaint me why the care of your daughter obliges a person of your seeming worth and fortune to be thus inquisitive about a wretched, helpless, friendless—*(weeping)* But I beg your pardon—tho' I am an orphan, your child is not; and your concern for her, it seems, has brought you hither—I'll be composed—pray go on, Sir.

Mr. Seal. How could Mr. Bevil be such a monster to injure such a woman!

Ind. No, Sir—you wrong him—he has not injur'd me—my support is from his bounty.

Mr. Seal. Bounty! when gluttons give high prices for delicacies they are prodigious bountiful.

Ind. Still, still you will persist in that error—

But my own fears tell me all—You are the gentleman, I suppose, for whose happy daughter he is design'd a husband by his good father; and he has, perhaps, consented to the overture: he was here this morning, dress'd beyond his usual plainness, nay, most sumptuously — and he is to be, perhaps, this night a Bridegroom.

Mr. Seal. I own he was intended such: but, Madam, on your account, I have determin'd to defer my daughter's marriage till I am satisfied from your own mouth of what nature are the obligations you are under to him.

Ind. His actions, Sir, his eyes only have made me think he design'd to make me the partner of his heart. The goodness and gentleness of his demeanour made me misinterpret all—'Twas my own hope, my own passion, that deluded me—he never made one amorous advance to me — His large heart and bestowing hand have only helped the miserable: nor know I why, but from his mere delight in virtue, that I have been his care, the object on which to indulge and please himself with pouring favours.

Mr. Seal. Madam, I know not why it is, but I, as well as you, am methinks afraid of entering into the matter I came about; but 'tis the same thing as if we had talk'd ever so distinctly—he ne'er shall have a daughter of mine.

Ind. If you say this from what you think of me you wrong yourself and him — Let not me, miserable tho' I may be, do injury to my benefactor — No, Sir, my treatment ought rather to reconcile

you to his virtues—if to bestow, without a prospect of return; if to delight in supporting what might, perhaps, be thought an object of desire with no other view than to be her guard against those who would not be disinterested; if these actions, Sir, can in a careful parent's eye commend him to a daughter, give yours, Sir, give her to my honest, generous Bevil—What have I to do, but sigh, and weep, to rave, run wild, a lunatic in chains, or hid in darkness, mutter in distracted starts, and broken accents, my strange, strange story!

Mr. Seal. Take comfort, Madam.

Ind. All my comfort must be to expostulate in madness, to relieve with frenzy my despair, and shrieking to demand of fate, why—why was I born to such variety of sorrows?

Mr. Seal. If I have been the least occasion—

Ind. No—'twas heaven's high will I should be such—to be plunder'd in my cradle! toss'd on the seas! and even there an infant captive! to lose my mother, hear but of my father—to be adopted! lose my adopter! then plung'd again in worse calamities!

Mr. Seal. An infant captive!

Ind. Yet then! to find the most charming of mankind once more to set me free (from what I thought the last distress) to load me with his services, his bounties, and his favours; to support my very life in a way that stole at the same time my very soul itself from me!

Mr. Seal. And has young Bevil been this worthy man?

Ind. Yet then again, this very man to take another! without leaving me the right, the pretence of easing my fond heart with tears! for oh! I can't reproach him; though the same hand that rais'd me to this height now throws me down the precipice.

Mr. Seal. Dear Lady! Oh! yet one moment's patience: my heart grows full with your affliction: but yet there's something in your story that—

Ind. My portion here is bitterness and sorrow.

Mr. Seal. Do not think so; pray, answer me; does Bevil know your name and family?

Ind. Alas! too well! Oh! could I be any other thing than what I am!—I'll tear away all traces of my former self, my little ornaments, the remains of my first state, the hints of what I ought to have been!— [*In her disorder she throws away a bracelet which Sealand takes up, and looks earnestly on it.*]

Mr. Seal. Ha! what's this! my eyes are not deceiv'd! It is, it is the same! the very bracelet which I bequeath'd my wife at our last mournful parting!

Ind. What said you, Sir! your wife! whither does my fancy carry me! what means this unfelt motion at my heart! and yet again my fortune but deludes me; for if I err not, Sir, your name is Sealand: but my lost father's name was—

Mr. Seal. Danvers! was it not?

Ind. What new amazement! that is indeed my family.

Mr. Seal. Know then, when my misfortunes drove me to the Indies, for reasons too tedious now to mention, I chang'd my name of Danvers into Sealand.

Enter Isabella.

Isab. If yet there wants an explanation of your wonder, examine well this face (yours, Sir, I well remember), gaze on, and read in me your sister Isabella.

Mr. Seal. My Sister!

Isab. But here's a claim more tender yet—your Indiana, Sir, your long lost daughter.

Mr. Seal. O my child! my child!

Ind. All gracious Heaven! is it possible! do I embrace my Father!

Mr. Seal. And do I hold thee!—These passions are too strong for utterance—Rise, rise, my child, and give my tears their way—Oh! my Sister!

[*Embracing her.*

Isab. Now, dearest niece, my groundless fears, my painful cares no more shall vex thee. If I have wrong'd thy noble Lover with too hard suspicions, my just concern for thee, I hope, will plead my pardon.

Mr. Seal. Oh! make him then the full amends, and be yourself the messenger of joy : fly this instant! tell him all these wondrous turns of Providence in his favour. Tell him I have now a daughter to bestow which he no longer will decline ; that this day he still shall be a Bridegroom : nor shall a fortune, the merit which his Father seeks, be wanting : tell him the reward of all his virtues waits on his acceptance.

[*Exit Isab.*

My dearest Indiana! [*Turns, and embraces her.*

Ind. Have I then at last a Father's sanction

on my Love! His bounteous hand to give, and make my heart a present worthy of Bevil's generosity!

Mr. Seal. Oh! my child! how are our sorrows past o'erpaid by such a meeting! Though I have lost so many years of soft paternal dalliance with thee, yet, in one day, to find thee thus, and thus bestow thee in such perfect happiness, is ample, ample reparation! and yet again the merit of thy Lover!

Ind. Oh! had I spirits left to tell you of his actions! how strongly filial duty has suppressed his Love; and how concealment still has doubled all his obligations! The pride, the joy of his alliance, Sir, would warm your heart, as he has conquer'd mine.

Mr. Seal. How laudable is Love, when born of virtue!—I burn to embrace him—

Ind. See, Sir, my aunt already has succeeded, and brought him to your wishes.

Enter Isabella, with Sir John Bevil, Bevil jun., Mrs. Sealand, Cimberton, Myrtle, and Lucinda.

Sir J. Bev. (entering) Where! where's this scene of wonder! — Mr. Sealand, I congratulate on this occasion our mutual happiness—Your good Sister, Sir, has, with the story of your daughter's fortune, fill'd us with surprise and joy. Now all exceptions are remov'd; my son has now avow'd his Love, and turn'd all former jealousies and doubts to approbation, and, I am told, your goodness has consented to reward him.

Mr. Seal. If, Sir, a fortune equal to his Father's hopes can make this object worthy his acceptance.

Bev. jun. I hear your mention, Sir, of fortune with pleasure only as it may prove the means to reconcile the best of Fathers to my Love — Let him be provident, but let me be happy—My ever-destin'd, my acknowledg'd wife!

[*Embracing Indiana.*

Ind. Wife!—Oh! my ever loved! my Lord! my Master!

Sir J. Bev. I congratulate myself, as well as you, that I had a son who could, under such disadvantages, discover your great merit.

Mr. Seal. Oh! Sir John! how vain, how weak is human prudence! what care, what foresight, what imagination could contrive such blest events, to make our children happy, as Providence in one short hour has laid before us!

Cimb. (to *Mrs. Sealand*) I am afraid, Madam, Mr. Sealand is a little too busy for our affairs: if you please, we'll take another opportunity.

Mrs. Seal. Let us have patience, Sir.)

Cimb. But we make Sir Geoffry wait, Madam.

Myrt. Oh! Sir, I am not in haste.

During this, Bev. jun. presents Lucinda to Indiana.

Mr. Seal. But here! here's our general benefactor! excellent young man that could be, at once, a Lover to her beauty, and a parent to her virtue!

Bev. jun. If you think that an obligation, Sir, give me leave to overpay myself in the only instance that can now add to my felicity by begging you to bestow this Lady on Mr. Myrtle.

Mr. Seal. She is his without reserve (I beg he may be sent for)—Mr. Cimberton, notwithstanding

you never had my consent, yet there is, since I last saw you, another objection to your marriage with my daughter

Cimb. I hope, Sir, your Lady has conceal'd nothing from me!

Mr. Seal. Troth, Sir, nothing but what was conceal'd from myself; another daughter who has an undoubted title to half my estate.

Cimb. How! Mr. Sealand; why then, if half Miss Lucinda's fortune is gone, you can't say that any of my estate is settled upon her: I was in treaty for the whole; but if that is not to be come at, to be sure there can be no bargain—Sir—I have nothing to do but to take my leave of your good Lady, my cousin, and beg pardon for the trouble I have given this old gentleman.

Myrt. That you have, Mr. Cimberton, with all my heart. [*Discovers himself.*

Omnes. Mr. Myrtle!

Myrt. And I beg pardon of the whole company, that I assumed the person of Sir Geoffry only to be present at the danger of this Lady's being disposed of, and in her utmost exigence to assert my right to her; which if her parents will ratify, as they once favour'd my pretensions, no abatement of fortune shall lessen her value to me.

Luc. Generous man!

Mr. Seal. If, Sir, you can overlook the injury of being in treaty with one who as meanly left her as you have generously asserted your right in her, she is yours.

Luc. Mr. Myrtle, tho' you have ever had my

heart, yet now I find I love you more because I bring you less.

Myrt. We have much more than we want, and I am glad any event has contributed to the discovery of our real inclinations to each other.

Mr. Seal. Well! however I'm glad the girl's disposed of any way. [*Aside.*

Bev. Myrtle! no longer rivals now, but brothers.

Myrt. Dear Bevil! you are born to triumph over me! but now our competition ceases: I rejoice in the pre-eminence of your virtue, and your alliance adds charms to Lucinda.

Sir J. Bev. Now, ladies and gentlemen, you have set the world a fair example. Your happiness is owing to your constancy and merit: and the several difficulties you have struggled with, evidently shew

Whate'er the generous mind itself denies,
The secret care of Providence supplies.

[*Exeunt.*

THE END.

THREE WEEKS AFTER MARRIAGE,

A

COMEDY

IN TWO ACTS,

BY ARTHUR MURPHY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN. { Sir CHARLES RACKETT.
DRUGGET, Father of Nancy.
LOVELACE, Lover of Nancy.
WOODLEY, Lover of Nancy.

WOMEN. { Lady RACKETT, Wife of Sir Charles.
Mrs. DRUGGET, Wife of Drugget.
NANCY, Daughter of Drugget.
DIMITY, Maid Servant.

A Servant, &c.

THREE WEEKS AFTER MARRIAGE.

ACT I.

Enter Woodley and Dimity.

DIMITY.

POH! poh! — no such thing — I tell you, Mr. Woodley, you are a mere novice in these affairs.

Wood. Nay, but listen to reason, Mrs. Dimity ; has not your master, Mr. Drugget, invited me down to his country-seat in order to give me his daughter Nancy in marriage? and with what pretence can he now break off?

Dim. What pretence! — you put a body out of all patience — But go on your own way, Sir; my advice is all lost upon you.

Wood. You do me injustice, Mrs. Dimity — your advice has governed my whole conduct — Have not I fixed an interest in the young lady's heart?

Dim. An interest in a fiddlestick! — You ought to have made love to the father and mother — What! do you think the way to get a wife, at this time of day, is by speaking fine things to the lady you've a fancy for! — That was the practice, indeed, but things are alter'd now — You must address the old people, Sir, and never trouble your head about your mistress. None of your letters,

and verses, and soft looks, and fine speeches — “Have compassion, thou angelic creature, on a poor dying” — Pshaw! stuff! nonsense! all out of fashion — Go your ways to the old curmudgeon, humour his whims — “I shall esteem it an honour, Sir, to be allied to a gentleman of your rank and taste —” “Upon my word, he’s a pretty young gentleman” — Then wheel about to the mother — “Your daughter, ma’am, is the very model of you, and I shall adore her for your sake —” “Here, come hither, Nancy; take this gentleman for better for worse —” “La! mama, I can never consent” — “I should not have thought of your consent — the consent of your relations is enough : why, how now, hussy!” — So away you go to church, the knot is tied, an agreeable honey-moon follows, the charm is then dissolv’d; you go to all the clubs in St. James’s Street; your lady goes to the Coterie; and, in a little time, you both go to Doctors’ Commons; and, if faults on both sides prevent a divorce, you’ll quarrel like contrary elements all the rest of your lives : that’s the way of the world now.

Wood. But you know, my dear Dimity, the old couple have received every mark of attention from me.

Dim. Attention! to be sure you did not fall asleep in their company; but what then! — You should have entered into their characters, play’d with their humours, and sacrificed to their absurdities.

Wood. But if my temper is too frank —

Dim. Frank, indeed! yes, you have been frank enough to ruin yourself — Have not you to do with

a rich old shop-keeper, retired from business with an hundred thousand pounds in his pocket, to enjoy the dust of the London road, which he calls living in the country!—and yet you must find fault with his situation!—What, if he has made a ridiculous gimcrack of his house and gardens! you know his heart is set upon it; and could not you have commended his taste! But you must be too frank! —“Those walks and alleys are too regular—those evergreens should not be cut into such fantastic shapes!”—And thus you advise a poor old mechanic, who delights in every thing that’s monstrous, to follow nature—Oh! you’re likely to be a successful lover!

Wood. But why should I not save a father-in-law from being a laughing-stock?

Dim. Make him your father-in-law first—

Wood. Why, he can’t open his windows for the dust—he stands all day looking through a pane of glass at the carts and stage-coaches as they pass by, and he calls that living in the fresh air and enjoying his own thoughts.

Dim. And could not you let him go on his own way? You have ruin’d yourself by talking sense to him; and all your nonsense to the daughter won’t make amends for it—And then the mother; how have you play’d your cards in that quarter?—She wants a tinsel man of fashion for her second daughter—“Don’t you see (says she) how happy my eldest girl is made by marrying Sir Charles Rackett. She has been married three entire weeks, and not so much as one angry word has pass’d

between them—Nancy shall have a man of quality too.”

Wood. And yet I know Sir Charles Rackett perfectly well.

Dim. Yes, so do I; and I know he'll make his lady wretched at last—But what then? You should have humour'd the old folks—you should have been a talking empty fop to the good old lady, and to the old gentleman an admirer of his taste in gardening. But you have lost him—he is grown fond of this Beau Lovelace who is here in the house with him; the coxcomb ingratiates himself by flattery, and you're undone by frankness.

Wood. And yet, Dimity, I won't despair.

Dim. And yet, you have reason to despair; a million of reasons—To-morrow is fix'd for the wedding-day; Sir Charles and his lady are to be here this very night—they are engag'd, indeed, at a great rout in town, but they take a bed here notwithstanding.—The family is sitting up for them; Mr. Drugget will keep you all up, in the next room there, till they arrive—and to-morrow the business is over—and yet you don't despair!—Hush!—hold your tongue; here comes Lovelace—Step in, and I'll devise something, I warrant you. [*Exit Woodley*] The old folks shall not have their own way—'Tis enough to vex a body to see an old father and mother marrying their daughter as they please in spite of all I can do. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Drugget and Lovelace.

Drug. And so you like my house and gardens, Mr. Lovelace.

Love. Oh! perfectly, Sir; they gratify my taste of all things. One sees villas where nature reigns in a wild kind of simplicity; but then they have no appearance of art, no art at all.

Drug. Very true, rightly distinguish'd — now mine is all art; no wild nature here; I did it all myself.

Love. What! had you none of the great proficientes in gardening to assist you?

Drug. Lackaday! no — ha! ha! I understand these things—I love my garden. The front of my house, Mr. Lovelace, is not that very pretty?

Love. Elegant to a degree.

Drug. Don't you like the sun-dial! plac'd just by my dining-room windows!

Love. A perfect beauty.

Drug. I knew you'd like it—and the motto is so well adapted—*Tempus edax et index rerum*. And I know the meaning of it—Time eateth and discovereth all things—ha! ha! pretty! Mr. Lovelace—I have seen people so stare at it as they pass by—ha! ha!

Love. Why now, I don't believe there's a nobleman in the kingdom has such a thing.

Drug. Oh! no—they have got into a false taste! I bought that bit of ground the other side of the road—and it looks very pretty—I made a duck-pond there for the sake of the prospect.

Love. Charmingly imagin'd!

Drug. My leaden images are well!

Love. They exceed antient statuary.

Drug. I love to be surpris'd at the turning of a walk with an inanimate figure that looks you

full in the face, and can say nothing to you, while one is enjoying one's own thoughts—ha! ha!—Mr. Lovelace, I'll point out a beauty to you—Just by the hawhaw at the end of my ground there is a fine Dutch figure with a scythe in his hand, and a pipe in his mouth—that's a jewel, Mr. Lovelace.

Love. That escap'd me : a thousand thanks for pointing it out—I observe you have two very fine yew-trees before the house.

Drug. Lackaday! Sir, they look uncouth—I have a design about them—I intend—ha! ha! it will be very pretty, Mr. Lovelace—I intend to have them cut into the shape of the two giants at Guild-hall—ha! ha!

Love. Exquisite!—Why, then they won't look like trees.

Drug. Oh! no, no—not at all—I won't have any thing in my garden that looks like what it is—ha! ha!

Love. Nobody understands these things like you, Mr. Drugget.

Drug. Lackaday! it's all my delight now—this is what I have been working for. I have a great improvement to make still—I propose to have my evergreens cut into fortifications; and then I shall have the Moro castle, and the Havanna; and then near it shall be ships of myrtle sailing upon seas of box to attack the town : won't that make my place look very rural, Mr. Lovelace?

Love. Why, you have the most fertile invention, Mr. Drugget.

Drug. Ha! ha! this is what I have been working for. I love my garden—but I must beg your pardon for a few moments—I must step and speak with a famous nurseryman who is come to offer me some choice things—Do, go and join the company, Mr. Lovelace—my daughter Rackett and Sir Charles will be here presently—I shan't go to bed till I see 'em—ha! ha!—my place is prettily variegated—this is what I have been working for—I fin'd for Sheriff to enjoy these things—ha! ha!

[*Exit.*

Love. Poor Mr. Drugget! Mynheer Van Thundertentrunk in his little box at the side of a dyke has as much taste and elegance—However, if I can but carry off his daughter, if I can but rob his garden of that flower—why, then I shall say: “This is what I have been working for.”

Enter Dimity.

Dim. Do lend us your assistance, Mr. Lovelace—you're a sweet gentleman, and love a good-natured action.

Love. Why, how now! what's the matter?

Dim. My master is going to cut the two yew-trees into the shape of two devils, I believe; and my poor mistress is breaking her heart for it—Do, run and advise him against it—she is your friend; you know she is, Sir.

Love. Oh! if that's all—I'll make that matter easy directly.

Dim. My mistress will be for ever oblig'd to you; and you'll marry her daughter in the morning.

Love. Oh! my rhetoric shall dissuade him.

Dim. And, Sir, put him against dealing with that nurseryman; Mrs. Drugget hates him.

Love. Does she?

Dim. Mortally.

Love. Say no more; the business is done. [*Exit.*

Dim. If he says one word, old Drugget will never forgive him—My brain was at its last shift; but if this plot takes—So, here comes our Nancy.

Enter Nancy.

Nancy. Well, Dimity, what's to become of me?

Dim. My stars! what makes you up, Miss?—I thought you were gone to bed.

Nancy. What should I go to bed for? only to tumble and toss, and fret, and be uneasy—they are going to marry me, and I am frightened out of my wits.

Dim. Why then, you're the only young lady within fifty miles round that would be frighten'd at such a thing.

Nancy. Ah! if they would let me choose for myself.

Dim. Don't you like Mr. Lovelace?

Nancy. My mama does, but I don't; I don't mind his being a man of fashion, not I.

Dim. And, pray, can you do better than follow the fashion?

Nancy. Ah! I know there's a fashion for new bonnets, and a fashion for dressing the hair—but I never heard of a fashion for the heart.

Dim. Why then, my dear, the heart mostly follows the fashion now.

Nancy. Does it!—Pray, who sets the fashion of the heart?

Dim. All the fine ladies in London, o' my conscience.

Nancy. And what's the last new fashion, pray?

Dim. Why, to marry any fop that has a few deceitful agreeable appearances about him; something of a pert phrase, a good operator for the teeth, and tolerable taylor.

Nancy. And do they marry without loving?

Dim. Oh! marrying for love has been a great while out of fashion.

Nancy. Why then, I'll wait till that fashion comes up again.

Dim. And then, Mr. Lovelace, I reckon—

Nancy. Pshaw! I don't like him: he talks to me as if he were the most miserable man in the world, and the confident thing looks so pleas'd with himself all the while—I want to marry for love, and not for card-playing—I should not be able to bear the life my sister leads with Sir Charles Rackett—and I'll forfeit my new cap if they don't quarrel soon.

Dim. Oh fie! no, they won't quarrel yet a-while—A quarrel in three weeks after marriage would be somewhat of the quickest—By and by we shall hear of their whims and their humours—Well, but if you don't like Mr. Lovelace, what say you to Mr. Woodley?

Nancy. Ah! — I don't know what to say — but I can sing something that will explain my mind.

SONG.

I.

When first the dear youth, passing by,
 Disclos'd his fair form to my sight,
 I gaz'd, but I could not tell why;
 My heart it went throb with delight.

II.

As nearer he drew, those sweet eyes
 Were with their dear meaning so bright,
 I trembled, and, lost in surprise,
 My heart it went throb with delight.

III.

When his lips their dear accents did try
 The return of my love to excite,
 I feign'd, yet began to guess why!
 My heart it went throb with delight.

IV.

We chang'd the stol'n glance, the fond smile,
 Which lovers alone read aright;
 We look'd, and we sigh'd, yet the while
 Our hearts they went throb with delight.

V.

Consent I soon blush'd; with a sigh
 My promise I ventur'd to plight;
 Come, Hymen, we then shall know why
 Our hearts they go throb with delight.

Enter Woodley.

Wood. My sweetest angel! I have heard all, and
 my heart overflows with love and gratitude.

Nancy. Ah! but I did not know you were

listening. You should not have betray'd me so, Dimity : I shall be angry with you.

Dim. Well, I'll take my chance for that—run both into my room, and say all your pretty things to one another there, for here comes the old gentleman—make haste away.

[*Exeunt Woodley and Nancy.*]

Enter Drugget.

Drug. A forward presuming coxcomb ! Dimity, do you step to Mrs. Drugget, and send her hither.

Dim. Yes, Sir—It works upon him I see.

[*Exit.*]

Drug. The yew-trees ought not to be cut because they'll help to keep off the dust, and I am too near the road already—a sorry ignorant fop !—When I am in so fine a situation, and can see every carriage that goes by—And then to abuse the nurseryman's rarities !—A finer sucking pig in lavender, with sage growing in his belly, was never seen !—And yet he wants me not to have it—but have it I will—there's a fine tree of knowledge too, with Adam and Eve in juniper ; Eve's nose not quite grown, but it's thought in the spring will be very forward—I'll have that too, with the serpent in ground-ivy—two poets in wormwood—I'll have them both. Ay ; and there's a Lord Mayor's feast in honey-suckle, and the whole court of Aldermen in hornbeam, and three modern beaux in jessamine, somewhat stunted : they all shall be in my garden, with the Dragon of Wantley in box—all—all—I'll have 'em all,

I

let my wife and Mr. Lovelace say what they will.

Enter Mrs. Drugget.

Mrs. Drug. Did you send for me, Lovey?

Drug. The yew-trees shall be cut into the giants of Guild-hall, whether you will or not.

Mrs. Drug. Sure, my own dear will do as he pleases.

Drug. And the pond, tho' you praise the green banks, shall be wall'd round; and I'll have a little fat boy in marble, spouting up water in the middle.

Mrs. Drug. My sweet, who hinders you?

Drug. Yes, and I'll buy the nurseryman's whole catalogue—Do you think, after retiring to live all the way here, almost four miles from London, that I won't do as I please in my own garden?

Mrs. Drug. My dear, but why are you in such a passion?

Drug. I'll have the lavender pig, and the Adam and Eve, and the Dragon of Wantley, and all of 'em—and there shan't be a more romantic spot on the London road than mine.

Mrs. Drug. I'm sure it is as pretty as hands can make it.

Drug. I did it all myself, and I'll do more—And Mr. Lovelace shan't have my daughter—

Mrs. Drug. No! what's the matter now, Mr. Drugget?

Drug. He shall learn better manners than to abuse my house and gardens—You put him in the head of it, but I'll disappoint you both—And

so you may go and tell Mr. Lovelace that the match is quite off.

Mrs. Drug. I can't comprehend all this, not I—but I'll tell him so, if you please, my dear—I am willing to give myself pain if it will give you pleasure: must I give myself pain!—don't ask me, pray, don't—I don't like pain.

Drug. I am resolv'd, and it shall be so.

Mrs. Drug. Let it be so then. (*Cries*) Oh! oh! cruel man! I shall break my heart if the match is broke off—if it is not concluded to morrow, send for an undertaker, and bury me the next day.

Drug. How! I don't want that neither—

Mrs. Drug. Oh! oh!—

Drug. I am your lord and master, my dear, but not your executioner—Before George! it must never be said that my wife died of too much compliance—cheer up, my love, and this affair shall be settled as soon as Sir Charles and Lady Rackett arrive.

Mrs. Drug. You bring me to life again—You know, my sweet, what a happy couple Sir Charles and his Lady are—why should not we make our Nancy as happy?

Enter Dimity.

Dim. Sir Charles and his lady, Ma'am.

Mrs. Drug. Oh! charming! I'm transported with joy!—Where are they? I long to see 'em.

Exit.

Dim. Well, Sir; the happy couple are arriv'd.

Drug. Yes, they do live happy indeed.

Dim. But how long will it last?

Drug. How long! Don't forbode any ill, you jade—don't, I say—It will last during their lives, I hope.

Dim. Well, mark the end of it—Sir Charles, I know, is gay and good-humour'd—but he can't bear the least contradiction, no, not in the merest trifle.

Drug. Hold your tongue—hold your tongue.

Dim. Yes, Sir, I have done—and yet there is in the composition of Sir Charles a certain humour, which, like the flying gout, gives no disturbance to the family till it settles in the head—When once it fixes there, mercy on every body about him! but here he comes. [Exit.

Enter Sir Charles.

Sir Ch. My dear Sir, I kiss your hand—but why stand on ceremony! To find you up thus late mortifies me beyond expression.

Drug. 'Tis but once in a way, Sir Charles.

Sir Ch. My obligations to you are inexpressible: you have given me the most amiable of girls; our tempers accord like unisons in music.

Drug. Ah! that's what makes me happy in my old days; my children and my garden are all my care.

Sir Ch. And my friend Lovelace—he is to have our sister Nancy, I find.

Drug. Why, my wife is so minded.

Sir Ch. Oh, by all means; let her be made happy—A very pretty fellow Lovelace—And as to that Mr. (Woodley I think you call him) he is but a

plain underbred, ill-fashioned sort of a—Nobody knows him; he is not one of us—Oh! by all means marry her to one of us.

Drug. I believe it must be so—Would you take any refreshment?

Sir Ch. Nothing in nature—it is time to retire.

Drug. Well, well! good night then, Sir Charles—Ha! here comes my daughter—Good night, Sir Charles.

Sir Ch. Bon repos.

Drug. (*going out*) My Lady Rackett, I'm glad to hear how happy you are, I won't detain you now—there's your good man waiting for you—good night, my girl. [*Exit.*

Sir Ch. I must humour this old *putt* in order to be remember'd in his Will.

Enter Lady Rackett.

Lady Rac. Oh la!—I'm quite fatigu'd—I can hardly move—why don't you help me, you barbarous man?

Sir Ch. There; take my arm—"Was ever thing so pretty made to walk?"

Lady Rac. But I won't be laugh'd at—I don't love you.

Sir Ch. Don't you?

Lady Rac. No. Dear me! this glove! Why don't you help me off with my glove! pshaw!—You aukward thing! let it alone; you an't fit to be about me, I might as well not be married for any use you are of—reach me a chair—You have no compassion for me—I am so glad to sit down—

Why do you drag me to routs!—You know I hate 'em.

Sir Ch. Oh! there's no existing, no breathing, unless one does as other people of fashion do.

Lady Rac. But I'm out of humour; I lost all my money.

Sir Ch. How much?

Lady Rac. Three hundred.

Sir Ch. Never fret for that—I don't value three hundred pounds to contribute to your happiness.

Lady Rac. Don't you!—not value three hundred pounds to please me!

Sir Ch. You know I don't.

Lady Rac. Ah! you fond fool!—but I hate gaming—it almost metamorphoses a woman into a fury—Do you know that I was frightened at myself several times to-night—I had a huge oath at the very tip of my tongue.

Sir Ch. Had you!

Lady Rac. I caught myself at it—and so I bit my lips—and then I was cramm'd up in a corner of the room with such a strange party at a whist-table, looking at black and red spots—did you mind 'em?

Sir Ch. You know I was busy elsewhere.

Lady Rac. There was that strange unaccountable woman, Mrs. Nightshade—She behav'd so strangely to her husband, a poor, inoffensive, good-natur'd, good sort of a good for nothing kind of man—but she so teiz'd him—“How could you play that card! Ah! you've a head, and so has a pin—You're a numskull, you know you are—

Ma'am, he has the poorest head in the world; he does not know what he is about; you know you don't—Ah fye!—I'm asham'd of you!"

Sir Ch. She has serv'd to divert you, I see.

Lady Rac. And then, to crown all—there was my Lady Clackit who runs on with an eternal volubility of nothing, out of all season, time, and place—In the very midst of the game she begins: "Lard! Ma'am, I was apprehensive I should not be able to wait on your La'ship—my poor little dog, Pompey—the sweetest thing in the world—a spade led! there's the knave—I was fetching a walk, Me'm, the other morning in the Park—a fine frosty morning it was—I love frosty weather of all things—Let me look at the last trick—and so Me'm, little Pompey—And if your La'ship was to see the dear creature pinch'd with the frost, and mincing his steps along the Mall—with his pretty little innocent face—I vow! I don't know what to play—And so Me'm, while I was talking to Captain Flimsey—Your La'ship knows Captain Flimsey—Nothing but rubbish in my hand!—I can't help it—And so, Me'm, five odious frights of dogs beset my poor little Pompey—the dear creature has the heart of a lion, but who can resist five at once!—And so Pompey barked for assistance—the hurt he received was upon his chest—the doctor would not advise him to venture out till the wound is heal'd for fear of an inflammation—Pray, what's trumps?"

Sir Ch. My dear, you'd make a most excellent actress.

Lady Rac. Well, now let's go to rest—but, Sir Charles, how shockingly you play'd that last rubber when I stood looking over you!

Sir Ch. My love, I play'd the truth of the game.

Lady Rac. No, indeed, my dear, you play'd it wrong.

Sir Ch. Poh! nonsense! you don't understand it.

Lady Rac. I beg your pardon, I am allow'd to play better than you.

Sir Ch. All conceit, my dear; I was perfectly right.

Lady Rac. No such thing, Sir Charles; the diamond was the play.

Sir Ch. Poh! poh! ridiculous! the club was the card against the world.

Lady Rac. Oh! no, no, no, I say it was the diamond.

Sir Ch. Zounds! Madam, I say it was the club.

Lady Rac. What do you fly into such a passion for?

Sir Ch. 'Sdeath and fury! do you think I don't know what I'm about? I tell you once more, the club was the judgment of it.

Lady Rac. May be so—have it your own way, (*walks about and sings*)

Sir Ch. Vexation! you're the strangest woman that ever liv'd; there's no conversing with you—Look'ye here, my Lady Rackett—it's the clearest case in the world, I'll make it plain in a moment.

Lady Rac. Well, Sir, ha! ha! ha! (*with a sneering laugh*)

Sir Ch. I had four cards left—a trump was led—they were six—no, no, no, they were seven, and we nine—then you know—the beauty of the play was to—

Lady Rac. Well, now it's amazing to me that you can't see it—give me leave, Sir Charles—your left hand adversary had led his last trump—and he had before finess'd the club, and rough'd the diamond—now if you had put on your diamond—

Sir Ch. Zounds! Madam, but we play'd for the odd trick.

Lady Rac. And, sure, the play for the odd trick—

Sir Ch. Death and fury! can't you hear me?

Lady Rac. Go on, Sir.

Sir Ch. Zounds! hear me, I say—will you hear me?

Lady Rac. I never heard the like in my life.
(*hums a tune, and walks about fretfully*)

Sir Ch. Why then, you are enough to provoke the patience of a stoic — (*Looks at her, and she walks about, and laughs uneasily*) Very well, Madam—You know no more of the game than your father's leaden Hercules on the top of the house—You know no more of whist than he does of gardening.

Lady Rac. Ah! ha! ha! (*takes out a glass and settles her hair*)

Sir Ch. You're a vile woman, and I'll not sleep another night under one roof with you.

Lady Rac. As you please, Sir.

Sir Ch. Madam, it shall be as I please—I'll order

my chariot this moment — (*going*) I know how the cards should be play'd as well as any man in England, that let me tell you — (*going*) — And when your family were standing behind counters, measuring out tape, and bartering for Whitechapel needles, my ancestors, my ancestors, Madam, were squandering away whole estates at cards; whole estates, my Lady Rackett — (*She hums a tune, and he looks at her*) — Why then, by all that's dear to me! I'll never exchange another word with you, good, bad, or indifferent — Look'ye, my Lady Rackett — thus it stood — the trump being led, it was then my business —

Lady Rac. To play the diamond, to be sure.

Sir Ch. Damn it! I have done with you for ever, and so you may tell your father. [*Exit.*]

Lady Rac. What a passion the gentleman's in! ha! ha! (*laughs in a peevish manner*) I promise him, I'll not give up my judgment.

Enter Sir Charles.

Sir Ch. My Lady Rackett, look'ye, Ma'am — once more out of pure good nature —

Lady Rac. Sir, I am convinc'd of your good-nature.

Sir Ch. That, and that only prevails with me to tell you — the club was the play.

Lady Rac. Well, be it so — I have no objection.

Sir Ch. It's the clearest point in the world — we were nine, and —

Lady Rac. And for that very reason — You know the club was the best in the house.

Sir Ch. There is no such thing as talking to you—You're a base woman—I'll part from you for ever; you may live here with your father, and admire his fantastical evergreens till you grow as fantastical yourself—I'll set out for London this instant—*(stops at the door)* The club was not the best in the house.

Lady Rac. How calm you are! Well!—I'll go to bed—will you come?—you had better—come then—you shall come to bed—not come to bed when I ask you!—Poor Sir Charles!

[Looks and laughs, then exit.

Sir Ch. That ease is provoking. *(crosses to the opposite door where she went out)*—I tell you the diamond was not the play, and I here take my final leave of you—*(walks back as fast as he can)* I am resolv'd upon it—and I know the club was not the best in the house. *[Exit.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

Enter Dimity.

DIMITY.

HA! ha! ah! oh! heavens! I shall expire in a fit of laughing—This is the modish couple that were so happy—such a quarrel as they have had—the whole house is in an uproar—ha! ha!—A rare proof of the happiness they enjoy in high life. I shall never hear people of fashion mentioned again, but I shall be ready to die in a fit of laughter—ho! ho! ho! this is three weeks after marriage, I think.

Enter Drugget.

Drug. Hey! how! what's the matter, Dimity?—What am I call'd down stairs for?

Dim. Why, there's two people of fashion—
(*stifles a laugh*)

Drug. Why, you saucy minx!—Explain this moment.

Dim. The fond couple have been together by the ears this half hour—are you satisfied now?

Drug. Ay!—what, have they quarrell'd?—what was it about?

Dim. Something above my comprehension, and yours too, I believe—People in high life understand their own forms best—And here comes one that can unriddle the whole affair. [*Exit.*

Enter Sir Charles.

Sir Ch. (*to the servants within*) I say, let the horses be put to this moment—So, Mr. Drugget.

Drug. Sir Charles, here's a terrible bustle—I did not expect this—what can be the matter?

Sir Ch. I have been used by your daughter in so base, so contemptuous a manner, that I am determin'd not to stay in this house to-night.

Drug. This is a thunder-bolt to me! after seeing how elegantly and fashionably you lived together, to find now all sunshine vanish'd—Do, Sir Charles, let me heal ~~this~~ breach if possible.

Sir Ch. Sir, 'tis impossible—I'll not live with her a day longer.

Drug. Nay, nay, don't be over hasty—let me intreat you; go to bed and sleep upon it—in the morning when you're cool—

Sir Ch. Oh! Sir, I am very cool, I assure you—ha! ha!—it is not in her power, Sir, to—a—a—to disturb the serenity of my temper—Don't imagine that I'm in a passion—I'm not so easily ruffled as you may imagine—but quietly and deliberately I can repay the injuries done me by a false, ungrateful, deceitful wife.

Drug. The injuries done you by a false, ungrateful wife! my daughter I hope—

Sir Ch. Her character is now fully known to me—she's a vile woman! that's all I have to say, Sir.

Drug. Hey! how! a vile woman!—what has she done!—I hope she is not capable—

Sir Ch. I shall enter into no detail, Mr. Drugget;

the time and circumstances won't allow it at present—but, depend upon it, I have done with her—a low, unpolish'd, uneducated, false, imposing—see if the horses are put to.

Drug. Mercy on me! in my old days to hear this!

Enter Mrs. Drugget.

Mrs. Drug. Deliver me! I am all over in such a tremble!—Sir Charles, I shall break my heart if there's any thing amiss.

Sir Ch. Madam, I am very sorry for your sake—but there is no possibility of living with her.

Mrs. Drug. My poor dear girl! What can she have done!

Sir Ch. What all her sex can do, the very spirit of them all.

Drug. Ay! ay! ay!—She's bringing foul disgrace upon us—This comes of her marrying a man of fashion.

Sir Ch. Fashion! Sir—That should have instructed her better—She might have been sensible of her happiness—Whatever you may think of the fortune you gave her, my rank in life claims respect—claims obedience, attention, truth, and love, from one raised in the world as she has been by an alliance with me.

Drug. And let me tell you, however you may estimate your quality, my daughter is dear to me.

Sir Ch. And, Sir, my character is dear to me.

Drug. Yet you must give me leave to tell you—

Sir Ch. I won't hear a word.

Drug. Not in behalf of my own daughter!

Sir Ch. Nothing can excuse her—'tis to no purpose—She has married above her; and, if that circumstance makes the lady forget herself, she at least shall see that I can, and will, support my own dignity.

Drug. But, Sir, I have a right to ask—

Mrs. Drug. Patience, my dear, be a little calm.

Drug. Mrs. Drugget, do you have patience, I must, and will enquire.

Mrs. Drug. Don't be so hasty, my love; have some respect for Sir Charles's rank; don't be violent with a man of his fashion.

Drug. Hold your tongue, woman, I say—you're not a person of fashion at least—My daughter was ever a good girl.

Sir Ch. I have found her out.

Drug. Oh! then it's all over—and it does not signify arguing about it.

Mrs. Drug. That ever I should live to see this hour! How the unfortunate girl could take such wickedness in her head! I can't imagine—I'll go and speak to the unhappy creature this moment.
[Exit.

Sir Ch. She stands detected now—detected in her truest colours.

Drug. Well! grievous as it may be, let me hear the circumstances of this unhappy business.

Sir Ch. Mr. Drugget, I have not leisure now—but her behaviour has been so exasperating, that I shall make the best of my way to town—My mind is fixed—She sees me no more, and so, your servant, Sir.
[Exit.

Drug. What a calamity has here befallen us! a good girl, and so well dispos'd, till the evil communication of high life and fashionable vices turn'd her to folly.

Enter Lovelace.

Love. Joy! joy! Mr. Drugget, I give you joy!

Drug. Don't insult me, Sir—I desire you won't.

Love. Insult you! Sir—is there any thing insulting, my dear Sir, if I take the liberty to congratulate you on—

Drug. There! there!—the manners of high life for you—He thinks there's nothing in all this—the ill behaviour of a wife he thinks an ornament to her character—Mr. Lovelace, you shall have no daughter of mine.

Love. My dear Sir, never bear malice—I have reconsidered the thing, and curse catch me! if I don't think your notion of the Guild-hall giants, and the court of Aldermen in hornbeam—

Drug. Well! well! well! there may be people at the court end of the town in hornbeam too.

Love. Yes, faith, so there may—and I believe I could recommend you to a tolerable collection—however, with your daughter, I am ready to venture.

Drug. But I am not ready—I'll not venture my girl with you—no more daughters of mine shall have their minds deprav'd by polite vices.

Enter Woodley.

Mr. Woodley—you shall have Nancy to your

wife, as I promis'd you — take her to-morrow morning.

Wood. Sir, I have not words to express—

Love. What the devil is the matter with the old haberdasher now !

Drug. And hark ye, Mr. Woodley—I'll make you a present for your garden of a coronation dinner in greens, with the champion riding on horseback ; and the sword will be full grown before April next.

Wood. I shall receive it, Sir, as your favour.

Drug. Ay, ay. I see my error in wanting an alliance with great folks — I'd rather have you, Mr. Woodley, for my son in law than any courtly fop of 'em all. Is this man gone!—Is Sir Charles Rackett gone?

Wood. Not yet—he makes a bawling yonder for his horses—I'll step and call him to you. [*Exit.*

Drug. I am out of all patience—I am out of my senses—I must see him once more—Mr. Lovelace, neither you, nor any person of fashion, shall ruin another daughter of mine. [*Exit.*

Love. Droll this!—damn'd droll! And every syllable of it Arabic to me—the queer old *putt* is as whimsical in his notions of life as of gardening. If this be the case—I'll brush, and leave him to his exotics. [*Exit.*

Enter Lady Rackett, Mrs. Drugget and Dimity.

Lady Rac. A cruel barbarous man! to quarrel in this unaccountable manner; to alarm the whole house, and expose me and himself too.

Mrs. Drug. Oh! child, I never thought it would have come to this—your shame won't end here; it will be all over St. James's parish by to-morrow morning.

Lady Rac. Well, if it must be so, there's one comfort; the story will tell more to his disgrace than mine.

Dim. As I'm a sinner, and so it will, Madam. He deserves what he has met with, I think.

Mrs. Drug. Dimity, don't you encourage her—you shock me to hear you speak so—I did not think you had been so harden'd.

Lady Rac. Harden'd! do you call it!—I have liv'd in the world to very little purpose, if such trifles as these are to disturb my rest.

Mrs. Drug. You wicked girl!—Do you call it a trifle to be guilty of falsehood to your husband's bed!

Lady Rac. How!—

[*Turns short, and stares at her.*

Dim. That! that's a mere trifle indeed—I have been in as good places as any body, and not a creature minds it now, I'm sure.

Mrs. Drug. My Lady Rackett, my Lady Rackett, I never could think to see you come to this deplorable shame.

Lady Rac. Surely the base man has not been capable of laying any thing of that sort to my charge! (*aside*) All this is unaccountable to me—ha! ha!—'tis ridiculous beyond measure.

Dim. That's right, Madam—Laugh at it—you serv'd him right.

Mrs. Drug. Charlotte! Charlotte! I'm astonish'd at your wickedness!

Lady Rac. Well, I protest and vow I don't comprehend all this—has Sir Charles accus'd me of any impropriety in my conduct?

Mrs. Drug. Oh! too true, he has—he has found you out, and you have behav'd basely, he says.

Lady Rac. Madam!

Mrs. Drug. You have fallen into frailty, like many others of your sex, he says; and he is resolv'd to come to a separation directly.

Lady Rac. Why then, if he is so base a wretch as to dishonour me in that manner, his heart shall ake before I live with him again.

Dim. Hold to that, Ma'am, and let his head ake into the bargain.

Mrs. Drug. Your poor father heard it as well as I.

Lady Rac. Then let your doors be opened for him this very moment—let him return to London—if he does not, I'll lock myself up and the false one shan't approach me, tho' he beg on his knees at my very door!—a base injurious man! [*Exit.*

Mrs. Drug. Dimity, do, let us follow, and hear what she has to say for herself. [*Exit.*

Dim. She has excuse enough I warrant her—What a noise is here indeed!—I have liv'd in polite families where there was no such bustle made about nothing. [*Exit.*

Enter Sir Charles and Drugget.

Sir Ch. 'Tis in vain, Sir, my resolution is taken—

Drug. Well, but consider, I am her father—indulge me only till we hear what the girl has to say in her defence.

Sir Ch. She can have nothing to say—no excuse can palliate such behaviour.

Drug. Don't be too positive—there may be some mistake.

Ch. No mistake—did not I see her, hear her myself?

Drug. Lackaday! then I am an unfortunate man!

Sir Ch. She will be unfortunate too—with all my heart—She may thank herself—She might have been happy, had she been so dispos'd.

Drug. Why, truly I think she might.

Enter Mrs. Drugget.

Mrs. Drug. I wish you'd moderate your anger a little—and let us talk over this affair with temper—my daughter denies every tittle of your charge.

Sir Ch. Denies it! denies it!

Mrs. Drug. She does indeed.

Sir Ch. And that aggravates her fault.

Mrs. Drug. She vows you never found her out in any thing that was wrong.

Sir Ch. So! She does not allow it to be wrong then!—Madam, I tell you again, I know her thoroughly, I say; I have found her out, and I am now acquainted with her character.

Mrs. Drug. Then you are in opposite stories—She swears, my dear Mr. Drugget, the poor

girl swears she never was guilty of the smallest infidelity to her husband in her born days.

Sir Ch. And what then?—What if she does say so!

Mrs. Drug. And if she says truly, it is hard her character should be blown upon without just cause.

Sir Ch. And is she therefore to behave ill in other respects? I never charg'd her with infidelity to me, Madam—there I allow her innocent.

Drug. And did not you charge her then?

Sir Ch. No, Sir; I never dreamt of such a thing.

Drug. Why then, if she's innocent, let me tell you, you're a scandalous person.

Mrs. Drug. Prithee, my dear—

Drug. Be quiet—tho' he is a man of quality, I will tell him of it—did not I fine for sheriff!—Yes, you are a scandalous person to defame an honest man's daughter.

Sir Ch. What have you taken into your head now?

Drug. You charg'd her with falsehood to your bed.

Sir Ch. No—never—never.

Drug. But I say, you did—you call'd yourself a cuckold—did not he, wife?

Mrs. Drug. Yes, Lovey, I'm witness.

Sir Ch. Absurd! I said no such thing—

Drug. But I aver, you did—

Mrs. Drug. You did, indeed, Sir—

Sir Ch. But I tell you, no—positively, no.

Drug. and Mrs. Drug. And I say, yes—positively, yes—

Sir Ch. 'Sdeath! this is all madness!

Drug. You said that she follow'd the ways of most of her sex—

Sir Ch. I said so—and what then?

Drug. There he owns it—owns that he call'd himself a cuckold—and without rhyme or reason into the bargain—

Sir Ch. I never own'd any such thing—

Drug. You own'd it even now—now—now—now—

Enter Dimity, in a fit of laughing.

Dim. What do you think it was all about—ha! ha! the whole secret is come out, ha! ha!—It was all about a game of cards—ha! ha!

Drug. A game of cards!—

Dim. (laughing) It was all about a club and a diamond. *(runs out laughing)*

Drug. And was that all, Sir Charles?

Sir Ch. And enough too, Sir—

Drug. And was that what you found her out in?

Sir Ch. I can't bear to be contradicted when I'm clear I'm in the right.

Drug. I never heard of such a heap of nonsense in all my life—Woodley shall marry Nancy.

Mrs Drug. Don't be in a hurry, my love; this will all be made up.

Drug. Why does he not go and beg her pardon then?

Sir Ch. I, beg her pardon! I won't debase myself to any of you—I shan't forgive her, you may rest assur'd. [Exit.

Drug. Now there—there's a pretty fellow for you!

Mrs Drug. I'll step and prevail on my Lady Rackett to speak to him—then all will be well. [Exit.

Drug. A ridiculous fop! I'm glad it's no worse, however.

Enter Nancy.

So Nancy—you seem in confusion, my girl!

Nancy. How can one help it—with all this noise in the house! and you're going to marry me as ill as my sister!—I hate Mr. Lovelace.

Drug. Why so, child?

Nancy. I know these people of quality despise us all out of pride, and would be glad to marry us out of avarice.

Drug. The girl's right.

Nancy. They marry one woman, live with another, and love only themselves.

Drug. And then quarrel about a card.

Nancy. I don't want to be a gay lady—I want to be happy.

Drug. And so you shall—don't fright yourself, child—step to your sister, bid her make herself easy—go, and comfort her, go.

Nancy. Yes, Sir.

[Exit.

Drug. I'll step and settle the matter with Mr. Woodley this moment. [Exit.

Enter Sir Charles, with a Pack of Cards in his Hand.

Sir Ch. Never was any thing like her behaviour—I can pick out the very cards I had in my hand, and then 'tis as plain as the sun—there—now—there—no—damn it!—no—there it was—now let's see—They had four by honours—and we play'd for the odd trick—damnation! honours were divided—ay—honours were divided—and then a trump was led—and the other side has the—confusion!—this preposterous woman has put it all out of my head (*puts the Cards into his pocket*) Mighty well, Madam; I have done with you.

Enter Mrs. Drugget.

Mrs Drug. Come, Sir Charles, let me prevail—come with me and speak to her.

Sir Ch. I don't desire to see her face.

Mrs. Drug. If you were to see her all bath'd in tears, I am sure it would melt your very heart.

Sir Ch. Madam, it shall be my fault if ever I am treated so again—I'll have nothing to say to her—(*going, stops*) Does she give up the point?

Mrs. Drug. she does, she agrees to any thing.

Sir Ch. Does she allow that the club was the play?

Mrs Drug. Just as you please—She's all submission.

Sir Ch. Does she own that the club was not the best in the house?

Mrs. Drug. She does—She does—

Sir Ch. Then I'll step and speak to her—I never was clearer in any thing in my life. [Exit.

Mrs. Drug. Lord love 'em! they'll make it up now—and then they'll be as happy as ever. [Exit.

Enter Nancy.

Nancy. Well! they may talk what they will of taste, and genteel life—I don't think it's natural—give me Mr. Woodley—La! there's that odious thing coming this way.

Enter Lovelace.

Love. My charming little innocent, I have not seen you these three hours.

Nancy. I have been very happy these three hours.

Love. My sweet angel, you seem disconcerted—and you neglect your pretty figure—No matter for the present; in a little time I shall make you appear as graceful and genteel as your sister.

Nancy. That is not what employs my thoughts, Sir.

Love. Ay—but, my pretty little dear, that shou'd engage your attention—to set off and adorn the charms that nature has given you should be the business of your life.

Nancy. Ah! but I have learnt a new song that contradicts what you say; and tho' I am not in a very good humour for singing, yet you shall hear it.

Love. By all means—don't check your fancy—I am all attention.

Nancy. It expresses my sentiments; and when you have heard them, you won't teize me any more.

SONG.

I.

To dance, and to dress, and to flaunt it about,
To run to park, play, to assembly and rout;
To wander for ever in whim's giddy maze,
And one poor hair torture a million of ways;
To put, at the glass, ev'ry feature to school,
And practise their art on each fop and each fool;
Of one thing to think, and another to tell—
These, these are the manners of each giddy Belle.

II.

To smile, and to simper, white teeth to display;
The time in gay follies to trifle away;
Against ev'ry virtue the bosom to steel,
And only of dress the anxieties feel;
To be at Eve's ear the insidious decoy;
The pleasure ne'er taste, yet the mischief enjoy;
To boast of soft raptures they never can know—
These, these are the manners of each giddy Beau.

[*Exit.*

Love. I must have her notwithstanding this—for tho' I'm not in love, yet I'm in debt.

Enter Drugget.

Drug. So, Mr. Lovelace! any news from above-stairs! Is this absurd quarrel at an end!—Have they made it up!

Love. Oh! a mere *bagatelle*, Sir—these little *fracas* among the better sort of people never last long—Elegant trifles cause elegant disputes, and

we come together elegantly again—as you see—for here they come in perfect good humour.

Enter Sir Charles and Lady Rackett.

Sir Ch. Mr. Drugget, I embrace you; Sir, you see me now in the most perfect harmony of spirits.

Drug. What, all reconcil'd again?

Lady Rac. All made up, Sir—I knew how to bring him to my lure—This is the first difference, I think, we ever had, Sir Charles—

Sir Ch. And I'll be sworn it shall be the last.

Drug. I am happy at last—Sir Charles, I can spare you an image to put on the top of your house in London.

Sir Ch. Infinitely oblig'd to you.

Drug. Well! well!—It's time to retire now—I am glad to see you reconciled—and now I'll wish you a good night, Sir Charles—Mr. Lovelace, this is your way—fare ye well both—I am glad your quarrels are at an end—This way, Mr. Lovelace. [*Exeunt Lovelace and Drugget.*

Lady Rac. Ah! you're a sad man, Sir Charles, to behave to me as you have done.

Sir Ch. My dear, I grant it—and such an absurd quarrel too—ha! ha!

Lady Rac. Yes—ha! ha!—about such a trifle—

Sir Ch. It's pleasant how we could both fall into such an error—ha! ha!

Lady Rac. Ridiculous beyond expression—ha! ha!

Sir Ch. And then the mistake your father and mother fell into—ha! ha!

Lady Rac. That too is a diverting part of the story—ha! ha!—But, Sir Charles, must I stay and live with my father till I grow as fantastical as his own evergreens?

Sir Ch. No, no, prithee—don't remind me of my folly.

Lady Rac. Ah! my relations were all standing behind counters, selling Whitechapel needles, while your family were spending great estates.

Sir Ch. Nay, nay—spare my blushes.

Lady Rac. How could you say so harsh a thing!—I don't love you.

Sir Ch. It was indelicate, I grant it—

Lady Rac. Am I a vile woman?

Sir Ch. How can you, my angel!

Lady Rac. I shan't forgive you—I'll have you on your knees for this. (*sings and plays with him*)
—“Go, naughty man”—Ah! Sir Charles—

Sir Ch. The rest of my life shall aim at convincing you how sincerely I love—

Lady Rac. (*sings*) “Go, naughty man, I can't abide you”—Well! come let us go to rest. (*going*)
Ah, Sir Charles!—now it's all over, the diamond was the play—

Sir Ch. Oh! no, no, no—my dear! ha! ha!—
It was the club indeed—

Lady Rac. Indeed, my love, you're mistaken.

Sir Ch. Oh! no, no, no—

Lady Rac. But I say, yes, yes, yes—(*Both laughing*)

Sir Ch. Pshaw, no such thing—ha! ha!—

Lady Rac. 'Tis so, indeed!—ha! ha!—

Sir Ch. No—no—no—you'll make me die with laughing—

Lady Rac. Ay, and you make me laugh too—
ha! ha! (*toying with him*)

Enter Footman.

Footm. Your honour's cap and slippers—

Sir Ch. Ay, lay down my night cap—and here take these shoes off. (*He takes 'em off, and leaves 'em at a distance*) Indeed, my Lady Rackett, you make me ready to expire with laughing—ha! ha!

Lady Rac. You may laugh—but I'm right notwithstanding.

Sir Ch. How can you say so?

Lady Rac. How can you say otherwise?

Sir Ch. Well now mind me, my Lady Rackett—We can now talk of this matter in good humour—we can discuss it coolly—

Lady Rac. So we can—and it's for that reason I venture to speak to you—are these the ruffles I bought for you?

Sir Ch. They are, my dear.

Lady Rac. They are very pretty—but indeed you played the card wrong—

Sir Ch. Poh! there is nothing so clear—if you will but hear me—only hear me—

Lady Rac. Ah!—but do you hear me—the thing was thus—The adversary's club being the best in the house—

Sir Ch. How can you talk so! (*somewhat peevish*)

Lady Rac. See there now—

Sir Ch. Listen to me—this was the affair—

Lady Rac. Pshaw! fiddlestick! hear me first.

Sir Ch. Poh!—no—damn it!—let me speak.

Lady Rac. Well; to be sure you're a strange man—

Sir Ch. Plague and torture! there is no such thing as conversing with you—

Lady Rac. Very well! Sir—fly out again—

Sir Ch. Look here now—here's a pack of cards—now you shall be convinc'd—

Lady Rac. You may talk till to-morrow—I know I'm right. (*walks about*)

Sir Ch. Why then, by all that's perverse, you are the most headstrong!—can't you look here now!—here are the very cards—

Lady Rac. Go on; you'll find it out at last—

Sir Ch. Damn it! will you let a man shew you! Poh! it's all nonsense—I'll talk no more about it—(*puts up the cards*) come, we'll go to bed—(*going*) Now only stay a moment—(*takes out the cards*) Now, mind me—see here—

Lady Rac. No! it does not signify—your head will be clearer in the morning—I'll go to bed—

Sir Ch. Stay a moment, can't ye?

Lady Rac. No!—my head begins to ake—(*affectedly*)

Sir Ch. Why then, damn the cards!—there—there—(*throwing the cards about*) and there, and there!—you may go to bed by yourself—and confusion seize me—if I live a moment longer with you!—(*putting on his shoes again*)

Enter Dimity.

Dim. Did you call, Sir?

Sir Ch. No—never—never—Madam—

Dim. (*in a fit of laughing*) What, at it again?

Lady Rac. Take your own way, Sir—

Sir Ch. Now then I tell you once more you are a vile woman.

Dim. La! Sir—this is charming—I'll run and tell the old couple. [*Exit.*

Sir Ch. (*still putting on his shoes*) You are the most perverse, obstinate, nonsensical—

Lady Rac. Ha! ha! don't make me laugh again, Sir Charles.

Sir Ch. Hell and the devil!—will you sit down quietly and let me convince you?

Lady Rac. I don't choose to hear any more about it—

Sir Ch. Why then, I believe you are possessed—it is in vain to talk sense and reason to you—

Lady Rac. Thank you for your compliment, Sir—such a man—(*with a sneering laugh*) I never knew the like—(*sits down*)

Sir Ch. I promise you, you shall repent of this usage, before you have a moment of my company again—it shan't be in a hurry, you may depend, Madam—Now see here—I can prove it to a demonstration—(*sits down by her, she gets up*) look ye there again now—you have the most perverse and peevish temper—I wish I had never seen your face!—I wish I were a thousand miles off from you! sit down but one moment—

Lady Rac. I'm dispos'd to walk about, Sir—

Sir Ch. Why then, may I perish if ever—a blockhead—an idiot I was to marry (*walks about*) such a provoking—impertinent—(*She sits down*) Damnation!—I am so clear in the thing—She is not worth my notice—(*sits down, turns his back, and looks uneasy*) I'll take no more pains about it—(*pauses for some time, then looks at her*) Is not it very strange that you won't hear me!

Lady Rac. Sir, I am very ready to hear you—

Sir Ch. Very well then—very well—my dear—you remember how the game stood—

Lady Rac. I wish you'd untie my necklace, it hurts me—

Sir Ch. Why can't you listen?—

Lady Rac. I tell you it hurts me terribly—

Sir Ch. Death and confusion! there is no bearing this—you may be as wrong as you please, and may I never hold four by honours if I ever endeavour to set you right again! [*Exit.*]

Enter Mr. and Mrs. Drugget, Woodley, Lovelace, and Nancy.

Drug. What's here to do now?

Lady Rac. Never was such a man born—I did not say a word to the gentleman—and yet he has been raving about the room like a madman.

Drug. And about a club again, I suppose. Come hither, Nancy; Mr. Woodley, she is yours for life.

Mrs. Drug. My dear, how can you be so—

Drug. It shall be so — take her for life, Mr. Woodley.

Wood. My whole life shall be devoted to her happiness.

Love. The devil! and so I am to be left in the lurch in this manner, am I!

Lady Rac. Oh! this is only one of those polite disputes which people of quality, who have nothing else to differ about, must always be liable to—This will all be made up.

Drug. Never tell me!—it's too late now—Mr. Woodley, I recommend my girl to your care—I shall have nothing now to think of, but my greens, and my images, and my shrubbery—though, mercy on all married folks! say I—for these wranglings are, I am afraid, *What we must all come to.*

Lady Rackett coming forward.

What we must all come to? What?—come to what?
Must broils and quarrels be the marriage lot?
If that's the wise, deep meaning of our poet,
The man's a fool! a blockhead! and I'll shew it.

What could induce him in an age so nice,
So fam'd for virtue, so refin'd from vice,
To form a plan so trivial, false, and low?
As if a Belle could quarrel with a Beau!
As if there were—in these thrice happy days,
One who from nature, or from reason strays!
There's no cross husband now, no wrangling wife;
The man is downright ignorant of life.

'Tis the Millennium this—devoid of guile;
Fair gentle Truth, and white-robd Candour smile.
From ev'ry breast the sordid love of gold
Is banish'd quite—No boroughs now are sold!
Pray tell me, Sirs (for I don't know, I vow)
Pray—is there such a thing as Gaming now?

Do Peers make laws against that giant Vice,
And then at Arthur's break them in a trice!
No—no—our lives are virtuous all, austere and hard;
Pray, Ladies—do you ever see a card!
Those empty boxes shew you don't love plays;
The managers, poor souls! get nothing now a days.
If here you come—by chance—but once a week,
The pit can witness that you never speak:
Pensive Attention sits with decent mien;
No paint, no naked shoulders to be seen!

And yet this grave, this moral, pious age
May learn one useful lesson from the stage.
Shun strife, ye Fair, and, once a contest o'er,
Wake to a blaze the dying flame no more—
From fierce debate fly all the tender loves,
And Venus cries, “coachman, put-to my doves.”
The genial bed no blooming Grace prepares,
“And ev'ry day becomes a day of cares.”

THE END.

VENONI,

AN

ANECDOTE

EXTRACTED FROM THE MIRROR.

Ah, vices! gilded by the rich and gay.

SHENSTONE.

IF we examine impartially that estimate of pleasure, which the higher ranks of society are apt to form, we shall probably be surprised to find how little there is in it either of natural feeling or real satisfaction. Many a fashionable voluptuary, who has not totally blunted his taste or his judgment, will own, in the intervals of recollection, how often he has suffered from the insipidity or the pain of his enjoyments, and that, if it were not for the fear of being laughed at, it were sometimes worth while, even on the score of pleasure, to be virtuous.

Sir Edward B—to whom I had the pleasure of being introduced at Florence, was a character much beyond that which distinguishes the generality of English travellers of fortune. His story was known to some of his countrymen who then resided in Italy, from one of whom, who could now and then talk of something beside pictures and operas, I had a particular recital of it.

He had been first abroad at an early period of life soon after the death of his father had left him master of a very large estate, which he had the good fortune to inherit, and all the inclination natural to youth to enjoy. Though always sumptuous, however, and sometimes profuse, he was observed never to be ridiculous in his expences; and, though he was now and then talked of as a man of pleasure and dissipation, he always left behind him more instances of beneficence than of irregularity. For that respect and esteem in which his character, amidst all his little errors, was generally held, he was supposed a good deal indebted to the society of a gentleman, who had been his companion at the University, and now attended him rather as a friend than a tutor. This gentleman was unfortunately seized at Marseilles with a lingering disorder, for which he was under the necessity of taking a sea-voyage, leaving Sir Edward to prosecute the remaining part of his intended tour alone.

Descending into one of the valleys of Piedmont, where, notwithstanding the ruggedness of the road, Sir Edward, with a prejudice natural to his country, preferred the conveyance of an English hunter to that of an Italian mule, his horse unluckily made a false step, and fell with his rider to the ground, from which Sir Edward was lifted by his servants, with scarce any signs of life. They conveyed him on a litter to the nearest house, which happened to be the dwelling of a peasant rather above the common rank, before whose door some of his neighbours were assembled at a scene of rural

merriment, when the train of Sir Edward brought up their master in the condition I have described. The compassion natural to his situation was excited in all; but the owner of the mansion, whose name was Venoni, was particularly moved with it. He applied himself immediately to the care of the stranger, and with the assistance of his daughter, who had left the dance she was engaged in, with great marks of agitation, soon restored Sir Edward to sense and life. Venoni possessed some little skill in surgery, and his daughter produced a book of receipts in medicine. Sir Edward, after being blooded, was put to bed, and tended with every possible care by his host and his family. A considerable degree of fever was the consequence of his accident: but after some days it abated; and, in little more than a week, he was able to join in the society of Venoni and his daughter.

He could not help expressing some surprise at the appearance of refinement in the conversation of the latter, much beyond what her situation seemed likely to confer. Her father accounted for it. She had received her education in the house of a lady, who happened to pass through the valley, and to take shelter in Venoni's cottage (for his house was but a better sort of cottage) the night of her birth. "When her mother died," said he, "the Signora whose name, at her desire, we had given the child, took her home to her own house; there she was taught many things of which there is no need here; yet she is not so proud of her learning as to wish to leave her father in his

“ old age; and I hope soon to have her settled near
“ me for life. ”

But Sir Edward had now an opportunity of knowing Louisa better than from the description of her father. Music and painting, in both of which arts she was a tolerable proficient, Sir Edward had studied with success. Louisa felt a sort of pleasure from her drawings, which they had never given her before, when they were praised by Sir Edward; and the family-concerts of Venoni were very different from what they had formerly been, when once his guest was so far recovered as to be able to join in them. The flute of Venoni excelled all the other music of the valley; his daughter's lute was much beyond it; Sir Edward's violin was finer than either. But his conversation with Louisa—it was that of a superior order of beings!—science, taste, sentiment!—it was long since Louisa had heard these sounds; amidst the ignorance of the valley, it was luxury to hear them; from Sir Edward, who was one of the most engaging figures I ever saw, they were doubly delightful. In his countenance, there was always an expression animated and interesting; his sickness had overcome somewhat of the first, but greatly added to the power of the latter.

Louisa's was no less captivating — and Sir Edward had not seen it so long without emotion. During his illness he thought this emotion but gratitude; and, when it first grew warmer, he checked it from the thought of her situation, and of the debt he owed her. But the struggle was

too ineffectual to overcome, and, of consequence, increased his passion. There was but one way which the pride of Sir Edward allowed of its being gratified. He sometimes thought of this as a base and unworthy one; but he was the fool of words which he had often despised, the slave of manners he had often condemned. He at last compromised matters with himself; he resolved, if he could, to think no more of Louisa; at any rate, to think no more of the ties of gratitude or the restraints of virtue.

Louisa, who trusted to both, now communicated to Sir Edward an important secret. It was at the close of a piece of music, which they had been playing in the absence of her father. She took up her lute, and touched a little wild melancholy air, which she had composed to the memory of her mother. "That," said she, "nobody ever heard except my father; I play it sometimes when I am alone, and in low spirits. I don't know how I came to think of it now; yet I have some reason to be sad." Sir Edward pressed to know the cause: after some hesitation she told it all. Her father had fixed on the son of a neighbour, rich in possessions, but rude in manners, for her husband. Against this match she had always protested as strongly as a sense of duty, and the mildness of her nature, would allow; but Venoni was obstinately bent on the match, and she was wretched from the thoughts of it—"To marry where one cannot love, —to marry such a man, Sir Edward!" —It was an opportunity beyond his power of resistance. Sir

Edward pressed her hand; said it would be profanation to think of such a marriage; praised her beauty, extolled her virtues, and concluded by swearing that he adored her. She heard him with unsuspecting pleasure, which her blushes could ill conceal — Sir Edward improved the favourable moment; talked of the ardency of his passion, the insignificance of ceremonies and forms, the inefficacy of legal engagements, the eternal duration of those dictated by love; and, in fine, urged her going off with him to crown both their days with happiness. Louisa started at that proposal. She would have reproached him, but her heart was not made for it; she could only weep.

They were interrupted by the arrival of her father with his intended son-in-law. He was just such a man as Louisa had represented him, coarse, vulgar, and ignorant. But Venoni, though much above their neighbour in every thing but riches, looked on him as poorer men often look on the wealthy, and discovered none of his imperfections. He took his daughter aside, told her he had brought her future husband, and that he intended they should be married in a week at farthest.

Next morning Louisa was indisposed, and kept her chamber. Sir Edward was now perfectly recovered. He was engaged to go out with Venoni; but, before his departure, he took up his violin, and touched a few plaintive notes on it. They were heard by Louisa.

In the evening she wandered forth to indulge her sorrows alone. She had reached a sequestered spot,

where some poplars formed a thicket on the banks of a little stream that watered the valley. A nightingale was perched on one of them, and had already begun its accustomed song. Louisa sat down on a withered stump, leaning her cheek upon her hand. After a little while, the bird was scared from its perch, and flitted from the thicket. Louisa rose from the ground, and burst into tears. She turned — and beheld Sir Edward. His countenance had much of its former languor; and, when he took her hand, he cast on the earth a melancholy look, and seemed unable to speak his feelings. “Are you not well, Sir Edward?” said Louisa, with a voice faint and broken — “I am ill” “indeed,” said he, “but my illness is of the mind. Louisa cannot cure me of that. I am wretched; but I deserve to be so. I have broken every law of hospitality, and every obligation of gratitude. I have dared to wish for happiness, and speak what I wished, though it wounded the heart of my dearest benefactress—but I will make a severe expiation. This moment I leave you, Louisa. I go to be wretched: but you may be happy, happy in your duty to a father; happy, it may be, in the arms of a husband, whom the possession of such a wife may teach refinement and sensibility — I go to my native country, to hurry through scenes of irksome business or tasteless amusement that I may, if possible, procure a sort of half-oblivion of that happiness which I have left behind, a listless endurance of that life which I once dreamed might be made delightful with Louisa.”

Tears were the only answer she could give. Sir Edward's servants appeared with a carriage ready for his departure. He took from his pocket two pictures; one he had drawn of Louisa, he fastened round his neck, and, kissing it with rapture, hid it in his bosom. The other he held out in a hesitating manner. "This," said he, "if Louisa will accept of it, may sometimes put her in mind of him who once offended, who can never cease to adore her. She may look on it, perhaps, after the original is no more—when this heart shall have forgotten to love, and cease to be wretched."

Louisa was at last overcome. Her face was first pale as death; then suddenly it was crossed with a crimson blush. "Oh! Sir Edward!" said she, "What—what would you have me do?"—He eagerly seized her hand, and led her, reluctant, to the carriage. They entered it, and driving off with furious speed, were soon out of sight of those hills which pastured the flocks of the unfortunate Venoni.

The virtue of Louisa was vanquished; but her sense of virtue was not overcome—Neither the vows of eternal fidelity of her seducer, nor the constant and respectful attention which he paid her during a hurried journey to England, could allay that anguish which she suffered at the recollection of her past, and the thoughts of her present, situation. Sir Edward felt strongly the power of her beauty and of her grief. His heart was not made for that part which, it is probable, he thought it could have performed: it was still subject to remorse, to

compassion, and to love. These emotions, perhaps, he might soon have overcome, had they been met by vulgar violence or reproaches; but the quiet and unupbraiding sorrows of Louisa nourished those feelings of tenderness and attachment. She never mentioned her wrongs in words: sometimes a few starting tears would speak them; and, when time had given her a little more composure, her lute discoursed melancholy music.

On their arrival in England, Sir Edward carried Louisa to his seat in the country. There she was treated with all the observance of a wife; and, had she chosen it, might have commanded more than the ordinary splendor of one. But she would not allow the indulgence of Sir Edward to blason with equipage, and shew that state which she wished always to hide, and, if possible, to forget. Her books and her music were her only pleasures; if pleasures they could be called, that served but to alleviate misery, and to blunt, for a while, the pangs of contrition.

These were deeply aggravated by the recollection of her father—a father left in his age to feel his own misfortunes and his daughter's disgrace. Sir Edward was too generous not to think of providing for Venoni. He meant to make some atonement for the injury he had done him by that cruel bounty which is reparation only to the base, but to the honest is insult. He had not, however, an opportunity of accomplishing his purpose. He learned that Venoni, soon after his daughter's elopement, removed from his former place of residence, and, as

his neighbours reported, had died in one of the villages of Savoy. His daughter felt this with anguish the most poignant, and her affliction, for a while, refused consolation. Sir Edward's whole tenderness and attention were called forth to mitigate her grief; and, after its first transports had subsided, he carried her to London, in hopes that objects, new to her, and commonly attractive to all, might contribute to remove it.

With a man possessed of feelings like Sir Edward's, the affliction of Louisa gave a certain respect to his attentions. He hired her a house separate from his own, and treated her with all the delicacy of the purest attachment. But his solicitude to comfort and amuse her was not attended with success. She felt all the horrors of that guilt, which she now considered as not only the ruin of herself, but the murder of her father.

In London, Sir Edward found his sister, who had married a man of great fortune and high fashion. He had married her, because she was a fine woman, and admired by fine men; she had married him, because he was the wealthiest of her suitors. They lived, as is common to people in such a situation, necessitous with a princely revenue, and very wretched amidst perpetual gaiety. This scene was so foreign from the idea Sir Edward had formed of the reception his country and friends were to afford him, that he found a constant source of disgust in the society of his equals. In their conversation, fantastic, not refined, their ideas were frivolous, and their knowledge shallow; and with all the pride

of birth and insolence of station, their principles were mean and their minds ignoble. In their pretended attachments, he discovered only designs of selfishness; and their pleasures, he experienced, were as fallacious as their friendships. In the society of Louisa he found sensibility and truth; her's was the only heart that seemed interested in his welfare: she saw the return of virtue in Sir Edward, and felt the friendship which he shewed her. Sometimes, when she perceived him sorrowful, her lute would leave its melancholy for more lively airs, and her countenance assume a gaiety it was not formed to wear. But her heart was breaking with that anguish which her generosity endeavoured to conceal from him; her frame, too delicate for the struggle with her feelings, seemed to yield to their force; her rest forsook her; the colour faded in her cheek; the lustre of her eyes grew dim. Sir Edward saw these symptoms of decay with the deepest remorse. Often did he curse those false ideas of pleasure which had led him to consider the ruin of an artless girl, who loved and trusted him, as an object which it was luxury to attain, and pride to accomplish. Often did he wish to blot out from his life a few guilty months, to be again restored to an opportunity of giving happiness to that family, whose unsuspecting kindness he had repaid with the treachery of a robber and the cruelty of an assassin.

One evening, while he sat in a little parlour with Louisa, his mind alternately agitated and softened with this impression, a hand organ, of a

remarkably sweet tone, was heard in the street. Louisa laid aside her lute and listened : the airs it played were those of her native country ; and a few tears, which she endeavoured to hide, stole from her on hearing them. Sir Edward ordered a servant to fetch the organist into the room : he was brought in accordingly, and seated at the door of the apartment.

He played one or two sprightly tunes, to which Louisa had often danced in her infancy ; she gave herself up to the recollection, and her tears flowed without control. Suddenly the musician, changing the stop, introduced a little melancholy air of a wild and plaintive kind — Louisa started from her seat, and rushed up to the stranger. He threw off a tattered coat and black patch. It was her father! — She would have sprung to embrace him ; he turned aside for a few moments, and would not receive her into his arms. But nature at last overcame his resentment ; he burst into tears, and pressed to his bosom his long lost daughter.

Sir Edward stood fixed in astonishment and confusion — “ I come not to upbraid you,” said Venoni ; “ I am a poor, weak, old man, unable
“ for upbraidings ; I am come but to find my
“ child, to forgive her, and to die ! When you
“ saw us first, Sir Edward, we were not thus. You
“ found us virtuous and happy ; we danced and
“ we sung, and there was not a sad heart in
“ the valley where we dwelt. Yet we left our
“ dancing, our songs, and our cheerfulness ; you
“ were distressed, and we pitied you. Since that

“ day the pipe has never been heard in Venoni’s
“ fields : grief and sickness have almost brought
“ him to the grave ; and his neighbours who loved
“ and pitied him, have been cheerful no more.
“ Yet, methinks, though you robbed us of happi-
“ ness, you are not happy — else why that de-
“ jected look which, amidst all the grandeur around
“ you, I saw you wear, and those tears which,
“ under all the gaudiness of her apparel, I saw
“ that poor deluded girl shed ! ” — “ But she shall
“ shed no more, ” cried Sir Edward ; “ you shall
“ be happy, and I shall be just. Forgive, my
“ venerable friend, the injuries which I have done
“ thee ; forgive me, my Louisa, for rating your
“ excellence at a price so mean. I have seen
“ those high-born females to which my rank might
“ have allied me ; I am ashamed of their vices,
“ and sick of their follies. Profligate in their
“ hearts, amidst affected purity they are slaves to
“ pleasure without the sincerity of passion ; and,
“ with the name of honour, are insensible to the
“ feelings of virtue. You, my Louisa ! — But I
“ will not call up recollections that might render
“ me less worthy of your future esteem — Continue
“ to love your Edward ; but a few hours, and you
“ shall add the title to the affections of a wife ;
“ let the care and tenderness of a husband bring
“ back its peace to your mind, and its bloom to
“ your cheek. We will leave for a while the won-
“ der and the envy of the fashionable circle here.
“ We will restore your father to his native home :
“ under that roof I shall once more be happy —

“ happy without allay, because I shall deserve my
“ happiness. Again shall the pipe and the dance
“ gladden the valley, and innocence and peace
“ beam on the cottage of Venoni! ”

THE END.



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Steele, Richard

The conscious lovers a comedy

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